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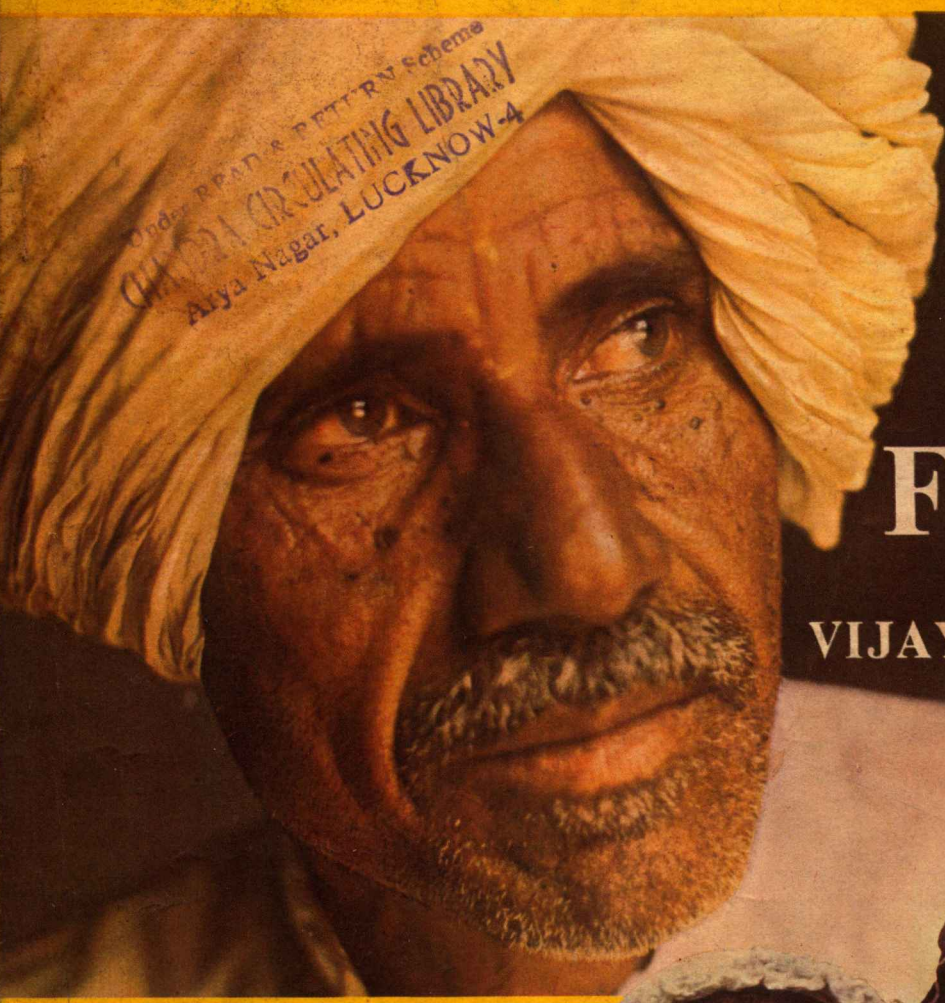

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BY
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inside

The Lok Sabha Speaker reminded us the other day that the poor Indian was paying Rs.900 per second as price for all the reprehensible conduct of the people's representatives. No one seems to be bothered by this revelation, bemoans Observer in **New Delhi Notings.**

*

Faces: As part of his Nehru Fellowship study, playwright Vijay Tendulkar went on a photographic spree, snapping faces in drought-hit areas, Banaras and elsewhere. He now goes beyond these faces and studies the men behind them.

*

The essence of classical music does not lie in words but in the way it is sung. Surinder Singh, singer and critic, discusses this with reference to the various maestros of the field in **Sa Re Ga Ma Pa of Hindustani Music.**

*

Anyone can keep fish, but everyone cannot keep them alive Shabbir Rupawala tells you how to build your own aquarium and enjoy it in **Give yourself a fishpond.**

*

Instant Babies: Two doctors in Britain have successfully toyed with nature's very forces of creation. Shivanand Karkal analyses this scientific miracle and its benefits.

*

Sir Edmund Hillary's expedition up the Ganga was in a jet-boat. But there have been other vessels like the budgerow and the steam boat. Ruskin Bond traces the history of sailing up the Ganga in **Slowly up the Ganga.**

*

Three decades after the assassination of Gandhi, the issue is still not clear. In forthright documentary-fiction style, Manohar Malgonkar untangles the web of evidence about the men, the motives and the aftermath in the Gandhi murder case. Excerpts from his novel **The Men Who Killed Gandhi.**

CORRECTION

In the September issue of Imprint, on the page "inside", the first item read as follows:

Observer's **New Delhi Notings** describes the ingredients of the Janata jam, discusses the desirability of military rule, assesses Mrs. Gandhi's strengths and weaknesses, and predicts a Centre-State conflict on the issue of Prohibition.

Actually, the **New Delhi Notings** beginning on page 7 of the September 1978 issue of Imprint did not discuss the desirability of military rule; the article only referred to the talk of military rule in the Communist circles in the capital.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Rajan Narayan, who was until recently the Editor of the Mirror, has joined Imprint as the Managing Editor. Mr. Ruskin Bond will continue to be associated with the magazine as the Contributing Editor.

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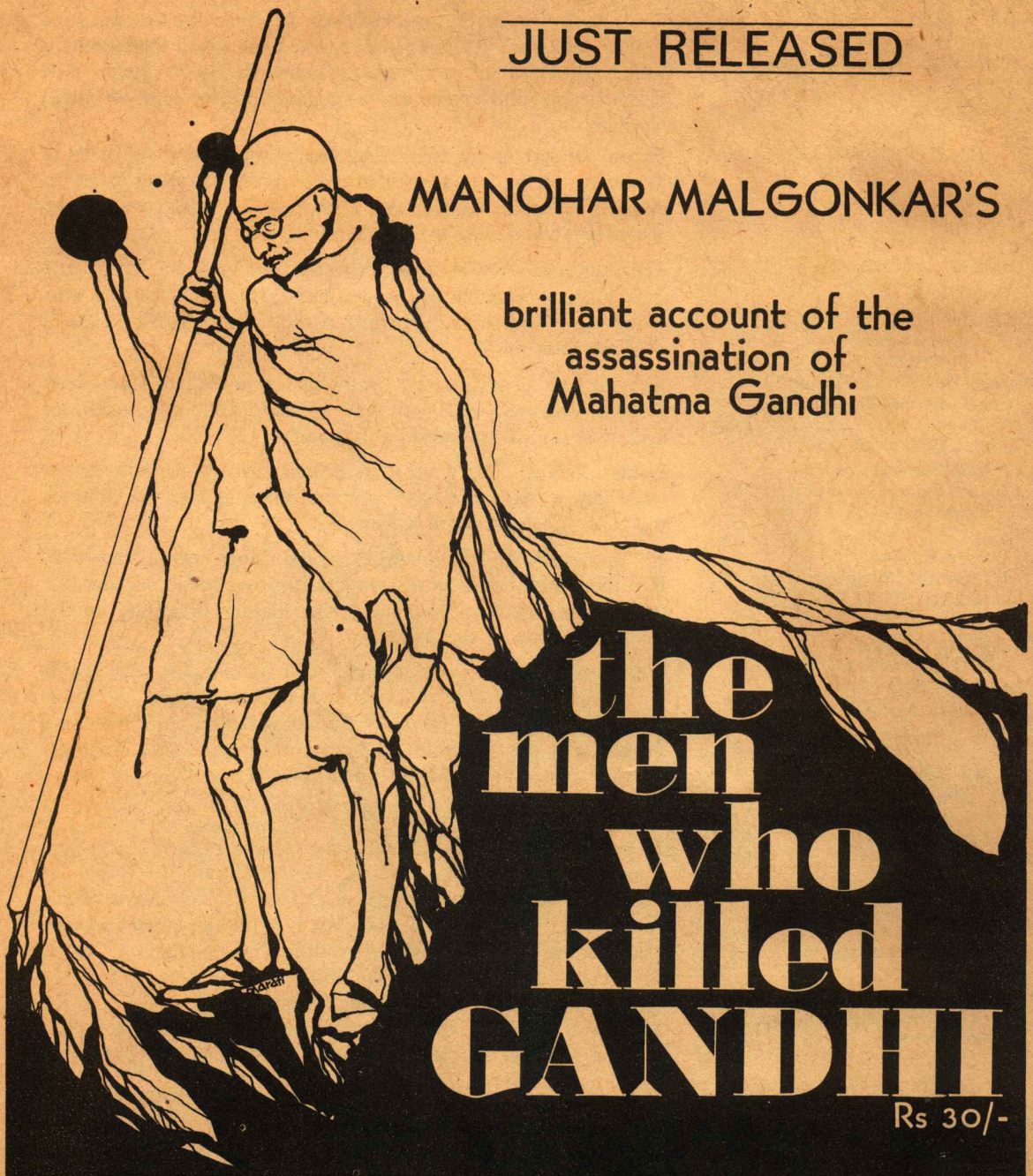
Cover transparency by Vijay Tendulkar

JUST RELEASED

MANOHAR MALGONKAR'S

brilliant account of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi



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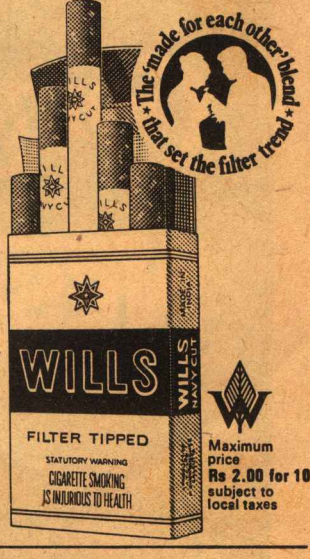

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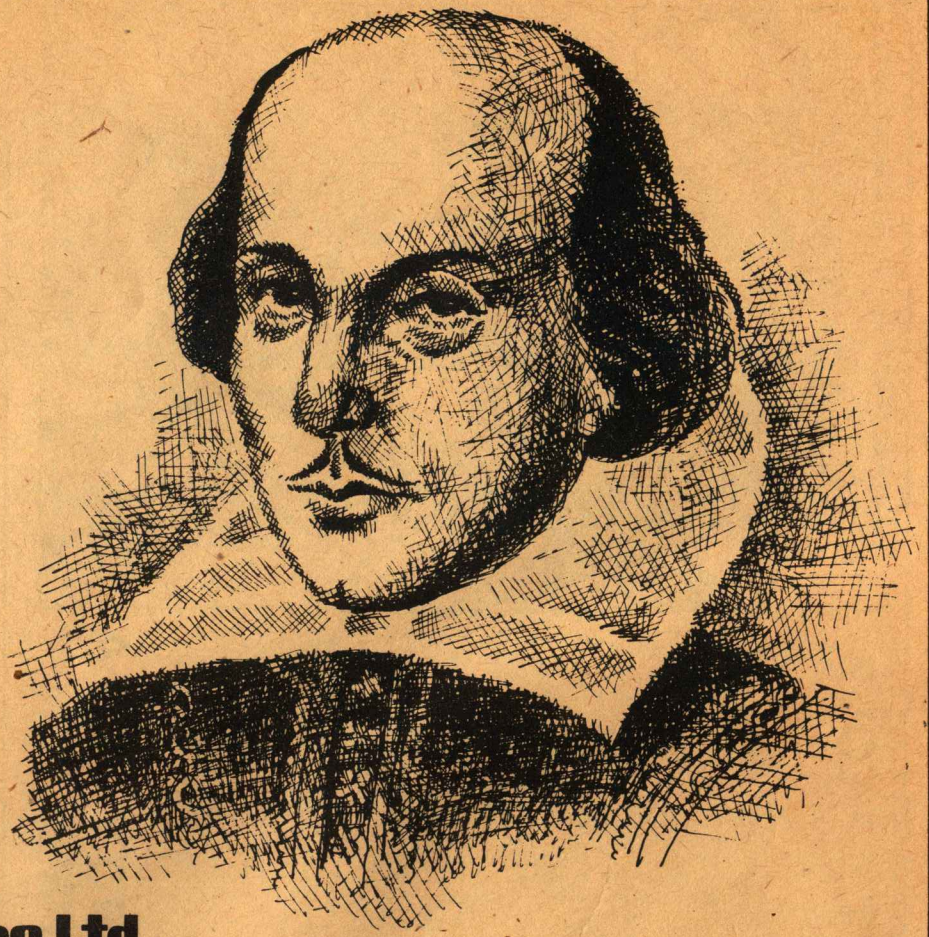

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The Lok Sabha Speaker reminded us the other day that the poor Indian was paying Rs.900 per second as price for all the reprehensible conducts of the people's representatives. No one seems to be bothered by this revelation.

NEW DELHI NOTINGS

By 'Observer'

WHAT A CONFOUNDING capital view! Chaos in Parliament, disorder outside the Prime Minister's house, floods, farmers in frenzy, antics of a former Minister, peccadilloes of a Minister's son, use of blackmail, open assault and battery on the Foreign Minister—the plate's full, did you say? But wait, there is more to come. If you have the stomach for it, New Delhi has enough stock—more thrills, more incredible happenings, more amusement all round. No entertainment tax either!

One wishes one could dismiss it all as mere entertainment, but the price of irresponsible conduct is too heavy for any flippant reaction. The Lok Sabha Speaker reminded us the other day that the poor Indian was paying a whopping Rs.900 per second as price for all the reprehensible conduct of the people's representatives that we are witnessing these days. Most of them do not seem to have been disturbed by this revelation. Stalling tactics, mudslinging, yelling at each other and even fisticuffs go on merrily.

One sometimes envies the *sang froid* of the Prime Minister in the midst of so much mayhem. He strives to be a true *Karma Yogi*, unmoved by all these mundane affairs. Neither can he be provoked by all the false accusations against him. So he goes on, like drops of water on a lotus leaf. Unmoved, for example, by the violence and devastation caused by Jat demonstrators outside 1 Safdarjung Road on August 13. He condemns their actions and two days later, ascending the ramparts of the Red Fort declares in measured tones that the police arsenals are well stocked with bullets to shoot the law breakers—the Kanjhawla farmers, to be precise. This statement was as unfortunate as the incident two days earlier was unnecessary.

The Jats may have disturbed Mr. Desai in the midst of his file reading and administrative reforming when they demonstrated outside his house but was the police action that followed all that unpreventable? Cut and dry reaction and no-nonsense talk are splendid qualities in any prime minister but they should be tempered with forbearance, tact and discretion.

For an unflappable man, Mr. Desai should

not have abruptly ended his discussions with the farmers and provoked them so seriously. This does not extenuate the arrogance of the Jat leaders whose action was outrageous beyond any doubt. The point is that political management is the art of being unemphatic and yet effective.

In the Kanjhawla issue, Mr. Desai is lucky that the police action has now passed into limbo, as no one wants to back the cause of the Jats for fear of being branded either anti-Harijan or bourgeois. Suppose certain other malcontents, say a section of students or trade unionists, had instead been at the receiving end of tear gassing and police lathis? Mr. Desai would then have greatly rued his artlessness.

Is it not also rather simplistic to look at problems like Kanjhawla as purely caste or class issues? Semantics and attributing class characteristics may suit the CPI and CPI-M. It may also be expedient for Mrs. Gandhi (just now) to call it a case of persecution of Harijans by the Janata. These labels—atrocities against Harijans, class war, kulak lobby and so on--are they the whole truth? What is the cause of the immediate conflict, not only in Kanjhawla, but elsewhere? Could all this be partly the result of heightened expectations of Harijans following the Janata victory? In property relations there has always been a certain polarisation, but how were these managed earlier? It seems to be a complex interaction of several factors, caste and class being just two of them. The degree of pernicious instigation by anti-Janata forces needs also to be assessed. These conflict situations need to be studied, dispassionately and scientifically. For our politicians however, everything is either black or white (or red?).

* * *

THE BIGGEST beneficiary of the present political mismanagement is, of course, Mrs. Gandhi. Even an act of God like floods are grist for her political mill. In an atmosphere of ennui and disenchantment, even her outrageous propaganda seems to go down well with the audience. All she wants is to keep the pot boiling till there is more chaos and till she can confuse the issues further. How incredible that her detractors are playing so naively into her hands! Which grandmaster in political chessplay suggested the tactical move of ordering her to dismantle a structure inside her compound or else face eviction? "Evict me", she screamed, "for building a shelter for the poor and weak who come to me for comfort. Evict me, and I shall gladly share the footpath with these wretched people."

True to form she made this melodramatic countermove and the ruling party was not ready with a ready response. By now though her style and form should have been familiar enough to them, most of their actions lack finesse. Despite elaborate planning and long preparations, her Save India Campaign of August 9 was a colossal flop not only in Delhi but everywhere else. That should have been a big setback but the Janata allowed her to recover lost ground. What will they think of next? Prosecute her for a traffic offence?

Equally lacking in planning and homework was the way the Janata introduced the anti-defection bill. The clumsy retreat they had to beat in the Lok Sabha nearly moved one to tears! Why was the text not made available to the opposition and why did they not monitor in advance the likely resistance from within the party? Such a communication gap can only be a symptom of a more serious malaise afflicting the party.

* * *

FOR SOME months now the Delhi citizens have been feeling alarmed at the galloping crime rate but the gravity of it all was not fully realised till the kidnapped Chopra children were found brutally murdered on August 29. A whole city rose in united condemnation of its police force in an unprecedented manner. Newspaper editors featured signed editorials on the front page expressing consternation. True, the police conduct was appalling in this case.

It is not readily appreciated that even more appalling is the disclosure that 109 human beings were killed in the streets of the capital in just two months owing to the rashness of automobile and bus drivers. What ails our police? What are the reasons for their inefficiency? It is all too easy to blame the police but it is about time we also faced squarely two very basic questions about the police in this country. These are providing them with the equipment tools and motivating them. In a sprawling city like Delhi how many fast patrol cars and wireless sets are provided to them? How modernised is the control room? How many policemen are deployed to be seen "on the beat", as a deterrent? How

are they trained? Why is the man on the beat not motivated enough to identify himself with the population? How many of them have roofs over their heads? How much money is spent on the police compared to other development expenditure?

The people and the police have suffered for too long in India, thanks to the fallacy that expenditure on police is non-developmental. How can there be development without public safety? What this country needs is a massive programme of modernisation and motivation of the police, almost unmindful of the expenditure. If adult education can justify an outlay of 600 crores of rupees, can't the police get at least an extra hundred? A country that is prepared to write off a few hundred crores of rupees every year when floods arrive with clockwork regularity will not invest a matching amount on its police forces. The armed forces are rightly being given extra benefits and are generally not compared with other arms of the government in the matter of amenities and allowances because the defence of the country is a priority area. By the same token, public safety and internal security ought to be viewed as matters of paramount significance and no cheese-paring attempted. A wishy-washy approach to this problem could be disastrous and we are perhaps already too late to make an earnest beginning.

To cap it all, when Mr. Jagjivan Ram spoke at the inauguration of Coast Guards in Bombay some time ago, he said he was ashamed even to use the innocuous verb "policing" because of its connotation. A fine statement for a Minister to make when he almost became the Home Minister himself! A frustrated police officer remarked: "For a change, Babuji made some others feel like untouchables."

* * *

A READER from Pune with forty years of newspaper reading experience has made an appeal to his editor in a letter which sounds eminently sensible. "May I request you and the editors of other newspapers to cease giving any publicity to the nauseating infighting among the leaders of the Janata Party?", he implores, and adds for good measure: "There are quite a few other, more edifying things happening in the country." What is puzzling is his listing of "cinema" among the "edifying happenings in the country". Here his sense of loyalty to *desi* cinema seems to have triumphed over pragmatism after all! Nevertheless, the point is certainly well taken. All Indian newspapers, please copy!

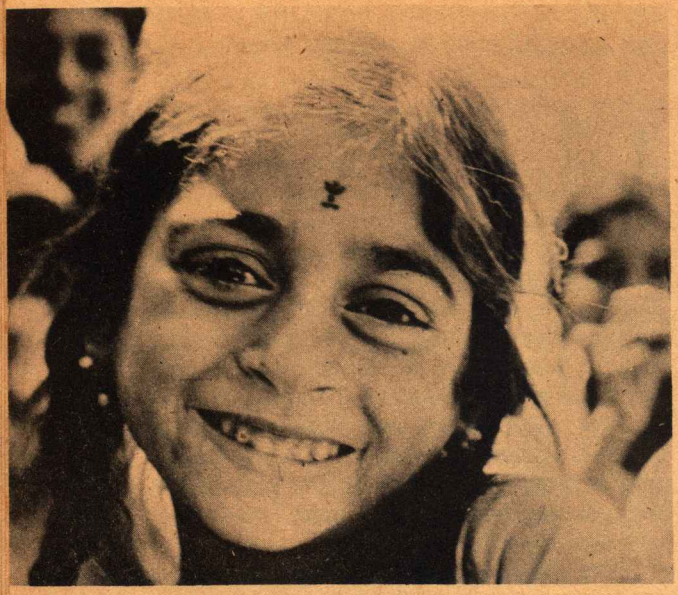
* * *

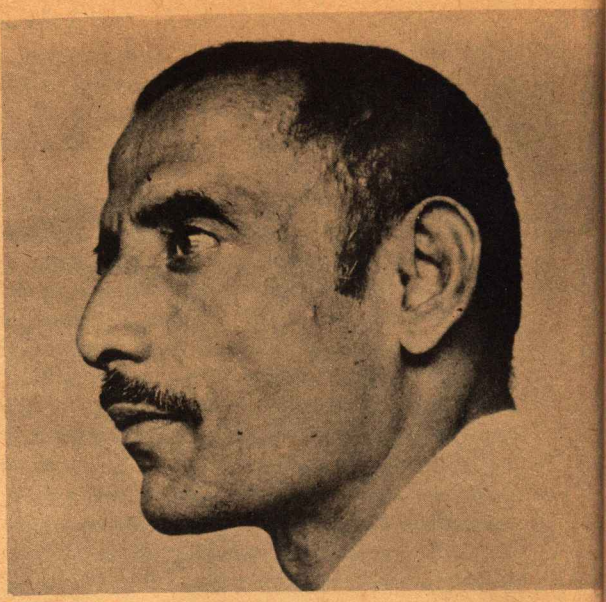
THERE IS a breed of political brokers in the capital who stalk the scene as fixers and busy bodies, trying to solve problems like the Janata dispute. Some of them are self-appointed alter-egos of Ministers and party men who hover on the periphery waiting for the horses they back to win, after which it will be roses all the way for them. There is a certain hierarchy and caste system among these persons. The conscience keepers, confidants and political advisers will not rub shoulders with those who arrange meetings or rent an audience. Then there are among them *shudras* who do the legwork for the *netas*—fetch water, deliver letters and generally act as errand boys.

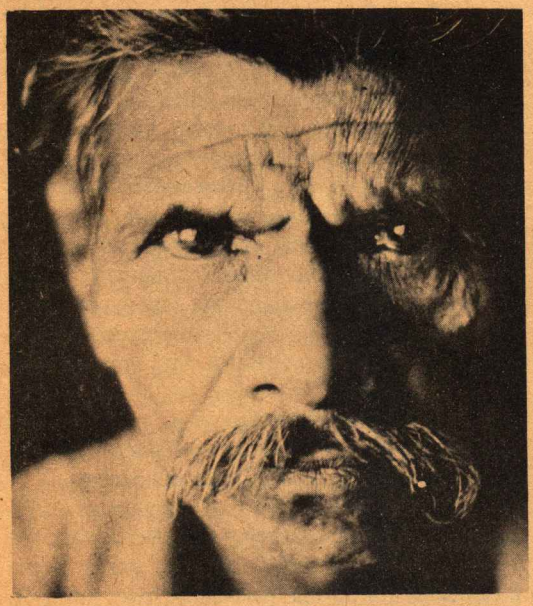
Over and above these, Mrs. Gandhi's camp employs another class—henchmen and hatchetmen trained in the art of unarmed combat. Most of these persons enjoy a few perks like living in the Minister's house or the MP's flat, using his car and telephones and most important of all, dropping his name and "fixing" things in general in return for certain gratifications. The system suits the *netas* because minions are a must in this country for proper image projection!

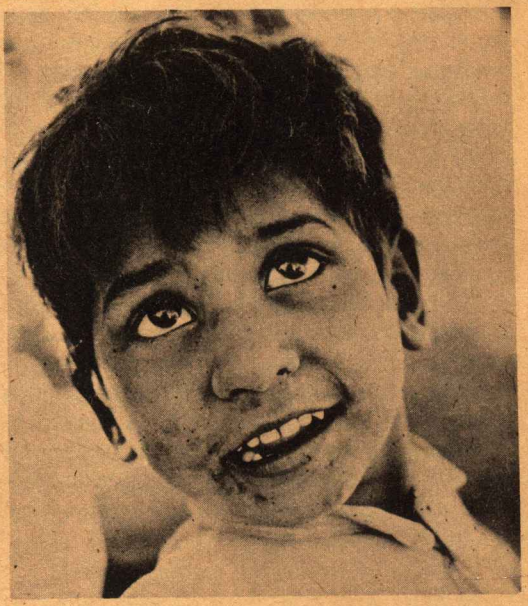
The only difference in this scheme of things between the Congress and the Janata regimes is that there are a few honourable exceptions to this rule in the present set up. Most of the former Jan Sangh Ministers, for example, still function unostentatiously. It is refreshing to see them waiting for their cars outside the Parliament or carrying the brief case themselves.

It sometimes happens that among this multitude of hangers-on, stooges and middlemen, the VIP is not recognised (unless he ties a bright green scarf round his head and carries a staff!). Sometimes when the VIP tries to perform some functions of his surrogates and sidekicks, there could be hilarious mix ups. Like this one: A Minister rang up a goldsmith and asked for some jewellery to be sent to his house for approval, on the eve of his daughter's wedding. "I don't speak to the Minister's toadies. I would like to speak to the Minister himself", said the suspecting goldsmith, because he was sure no Minister initiates a phone call himself. "I am the Minister", said the Minister. "Come off it, wise guy", said the jeweller to the Minister, "Nagarwalla did it before you." **THE END**









The face is the window to the human personality. To look into the soul of a human being, you have got to go beyond the face to peer into the human personality. Photography provides a means of acquiring a permanent record of a face. A record which you can study in leisure and at length. Study the faces carefully before you begin to read. In this article, it is the face that is important and not the words. Words are fleeting as the wind, but the faces can leave a permanent impress on your mind and memory.

As part of his Nehru Fellowship study, playwright, Vijay Tendulkar went on a photographic spree, snapping faces in drought-hit areas, Banaras and elsewhere. He now goes beyond these faces and studies the men behind them.

FACES

By Vijay Tendulkar
(Translated by Priya Adarkar)

I DON'T KNOW the exact day when I first peered through the lens of a camera, but I do feel that the camera gave me a new sense of sight.

I had always had a liking for studying faces. I would see a resemblance between two which I had encountered at two different times, in two different places, with no connection at all between them. And then I would attempt, when I could, to find out what relation if any they bore to each other. Usually there was none; but when occasionally I realised that there was a relation, I felt the joy of a discovery. Once, I began to notice facial resemblances between husbands and wives, and then spent days in pursuit of this topic of inquiry.

I don't mean just an obvious resemblance, but one that made you feel these two individuals had come to birth just for each other. And often one felt not just this, but that they were in fact blood brother and sister; or at the very least, born in the same family. This was an unscientific line of thought but helped me pass my time pleasantly for a while.

A similar subject for research was the fact that in every family there is one person whose face is totally different from that of the others. This difference is so great that you are reminded of the fable of the crow's egg left in the koel's nest.

A similar but slightly different subject of curiosity was that people come to resemble, in personality and even in facial features, the kind of company for which they have worked for a long time. I mean, if it is a Parsi company, an executive in it begins to look like a Parsi. Or, if it is a Japanese company, then the features of one of its executives (though he may be a Chitpavan Brahmin) gradually begin to assume a Japanese cast.

WHEN you see someone in person, you see the man along with his face. His gait, his behaviour, his life history come into it. But through the camera you see the face alone. No more left when all else has dropped away. Sometimes without its mask. Sometimes amazingly genuine. And there is one more convenience to a camera, it enables you to *record* the face behind the mask. Sometimes you find it without planning to record it. And then you realise later that it has been recorded.

I remember a photograph in an American photographic display. It was a group photograph taken a long time ago by an anonymous photographer. An unwieldy camera on a tripod. The kind you covered with a black cloth before taking a photograph. Look this way, don't laugh, steady please, one two three—this said, the button would be pressed and the photograph taken.

In this particular photograph, there were about fifty people, standing or seated in front of a house. In the front row they were seated on the ground. Behind that on chairs, behind that standing on the ground. And still further

behind, standing on a raised platform peering over the people standing in front. Among them were men, women, young, old, the lot. They had all been stood or seated in position for the picture to be taken. And now it was time, so they all posed and gazed at the camera. Time went on, and the camera was still being got ready. They grew tense. There was no chance of dropping the pose, looking here and there, sneezing or coughing. They were all stiff and nervous. And the photographer said "three" so at last the photograph was over! They all cheered up; some breathed a sigh of relief, some let out their sucked-in stomachs, and deflated their puffed-out chests; one took out a snuffbox; another moved his stiff neck about and mopped away the sweat. And the mischievous photographer (who had earlier only been pretending) *now* took the real picture.

A photograph of 'After the photograph.' I stood for at least half an hour at that exhibition looking at this picture alone. An extraordinarily informal and genuine picture of fifty-odd people of every variety—all completely unconscious of the camera.

My very first experiments in photography were on my children. As they continued, the children became so used to them that the moment I picked up my camera even my two-year old son casually struck a pose. Some of these photos did not turn out to be faithful to the original person, who looked rather different in them. Sometimes more handsome, sometimes totally unattractive. Sometimes they looked old for their age or, if thin, they looked fat. I spent a lot of time looking at these photographs. It felt strange that people I knew well should look slightly or even completely unfamiliar in the photographs I took. It was a mystery to me how, when I had photographed a man standing right in front of me, the photograph should come out different from the original. I would keep remembering that, when I looked through the lens, these people hadn't looked the way they did now. Then how had the change that appeared in the photograph taken place, and what was it? Such questions kept bothering me.

A self-sufficient world

THOSE were the days of box cameras. Then an electronic camera came into my hands. I saw the photographs from the first roll I exposed on it and was quite shaken at the minuteness of the details in them. In the portraits, the spots on the faces, and even the texture of the skin, had come out clearly. The face in the photograph did not look beautiful, but one felt there was genuineness, and life in it. One felt it would move at any moment. It was I who had taken the photograph, but the alchemy of the camera struck me dumb.

After this, I felt still further under the spell of photography. If not on account of its technical or artistic challenge, then because of the subjects of inquiry it opened up for me at every step, and the delightful jolts of surprise, small or great, that I got from it. Actually this medium should have been a blunt straightforward one. An uncomplicated matter of the subject on the one hand, and the photograph on the other. Nevertheless, in the single moment that intervened between the two, something extra would have occurred, and there was no explanation of what it was and how it had taken place. So far, the camera had not, in my hands been a hundred per cent reliable instrument, and that was why I was being carried away further and further into an addiction to photography. I had developed a passion for the unexpectedness of the medium.

Facial landscapes

I DID not develop or print my own photographs. At first this was done at a shop, and later a photographer friend took on the task. I kept getting, without planning, object-lessons in how different a mood each copy of the same photograph conveyed, merely if variations were made in the lightness or darkness of the print. I also noticed that the mood of a photograph was one if it was small, and quite a different one if it was enlarged. This was particularly so with faces. In a small photograph the whole face spoke to one. In a large one it was preeminently the eyes that would begin to speak, and with this import the meaning of the face would change completely.

I learnt too that because of the advantage of being able to give a photograph a new frame during enlargement, and enlarging only the portion required, a photograph could become a fundamentally different one. For instance, a man in a crowd. He has one appearance when seen in the crowd. When enlarging the photograph, if you leave out the crowd and enlarge

only the man, then he becomes quite different, independent and with a significance of his own.

Or else take a man's face—if you enlarge just the eye, a photograph quite independent of the portrait of the face is created—a photograph of a live and independent eye. The eye itself becomes a self-sufficient world, eloquent with a meaning of its own.

So far, my enthusiastic efforts had been only in black and white photography. I had one subject in particular and that was: faces. It wasn't that I avoided photographing nature; but I didn't much enjoy it.

ONCE a roll of colour film came to my hands. Timidly, I exposed it just on members of my family. When I got back the photographs, it was a new experience. The colours in them corresponded in name only to those in real life. Faces, clothes, backgrounds revealed such relationships with each other as if they had a different reality of their own; relationships that were both good and bad, independent and self-sufficient.

While taking these colour photographs, I had not given separate and careful thought to the question of colour; I had taken them just like black and white photographs. But the effect of colour on the original faces was very different from that of black and white photography. Now the skin, the eyes, had a colour not, of course, faithful to the original. It changed according to the light available; sometimes there was a greater blueness or yellowness to it.

Now that the background was coloured, its relationship with the main figure had changed completely. It had developed an existence of its own. In some places it snatched away the attention from the main figure; even some completely trifling detail in it, proving to be unexpectedly important only on account of its different colour, would upset the whole balance of the picture. All this was calculated to remove the charm from colour photography for me, and draw me closer to the black and white kind. But there were two among these early colour photographs of mine which were a little different. One was of caged lovebirds. Their colours and shades had come out differently but more beautifully in the photographs. The other was of my daughter. In this photograph, taken on the seashore rather early in the morning, the texture of the skin in the soft golden sunlight had emerged with extraordinary delicacy, so much so that it almost seemed transparent, real, alive.

THESE two photographs stimulated my interest in colour. I decided to continue with colour photography side by side with black and white. But I could not afford it at all. Besides, in the daily rush and hurry of a city like Bombay where would I find ever-new subjects for colour photography? So my progress in the medium was slow. When I occasionally saw a suitable subject, I would not have my camera with me. Then I would take mental photographs instead. And, sometimes, I travelled all over from day's end to day's end, finishing my errands, with the camera determinedly slung from my shoulder, but did not find any worthwhile subject. The day would be spent guarding my camera, for if once it was lost, it wouldn't be easy to buy another one.

Then I got the Nehru Fellowship and the opportunity for plenty of travel came to me of its own accord. The problem of the high expense of photographic equipment, too, was solved to some extent. I decided to work on my project mainly with the help of a camera and tape recorder. I would not keep notes or a diary, but would keep a visual record of what I saw and a sound record of what I heard. At this juncture the medium of photographic slides (as opposed to photographic prints) became available to me. I also got the use of an automatic slide-projector. I could now see the photos I took in as large a size as I wished. Moreover, slides take up much less storage space. And I realised that, more than in prints of colour photographs, their life-sized or larger than life-sized images against a clear white background achieved a totally different look for colours, that tiny details came to amazing life and stood out clearly. What was not apparent on paper became apparent against a white wall. A photograph on a slide can be a living, embodied escaping moment in the unbroken flow of life. We do not make it lifeless; through the alchemy of the camera we only hold it still. And we can see it again when we like, as often as we like, in its stilled but not lifeless form.

The limits of motion

AT THIS point I handled a different medium: the medium of Super 8 (8 mm) cinematography. This too was in colour. It was not still, but moved. I felt I was handling a more powerful

Picture A

medium than still photography (it was also more expensive). But in a short time I learnt both the strength and limitations of this medium. Here one had, readymade, a chain of countless visual moments; but one could not, however, stop any one of them and examine it closely. Motion itself was a limitation of the medium. The constantly moving moments on the film, linked continuously, had little impact in comparison with the extraordinary still moments on the slides, so full of vitality, so onward-flowing. Even if they (the moving images) had a pleasure of their own, I could not find in film the depth I found in still photography, and while using both media, my emphasis remained on slides.

Of the faces I have collected, those on the slides communicate better with me than those in the films. They (some of them are featured in this magazine) have become my kindred, as those in the films have not. The latter are acquaintance, and formal ones only. They pass in front of me and away before I can understand anything about them. In spite of my seeing them again and again they have been unable to introduce themselves properly. It is not that this is impossible in the case of films, not at all; but for that one would have to use a lot of raw stock. That means enormous expense. A slide suits my pocket better.

The faces speak

NOW about the photographs printed in this magazine. A small introduction is the photographs themselves. If you look carefully at each one of them one life after another communicates itself. Some details surrounding the faces also speak out. But one must listen with the eyes. If we ourselves start speaking, the faces in front of us will be silent.

It would be a good idea to listen carefully to what each one of these faces is saying before reading the matter follows. Because in that matter I shall be telling the details I know about these faces. Now for the first face.

A small farmer of Maharashtra

I SAW a lot of villages on account of my fellowship—villages in many different parts of the country. I learnt of a separate class by itself of small farmers existing in these villages. The small farmer pours out his labours on two to four acres of usually middling, or not so good, or sometimes outright inferior land, in order to raise enough of a crop to keep himself half-starved. Within this he has to manage a livelihood for himself, his wife, at least six or seven children, and sometimes his parents, too old to work, or

at least one parent. If he has a bullock for the land, then the ground is too narrow and impoverished to support the expense of keeping it. So, in effect, he also has to support the bullock. He has the odd cow or she-buffalo. She yields only a nominal amount of milk. So he supports her as well. He will not abandon her even if she gives no milk.

Just as his old mother is no great burden for him, so too, through some dutiful instinct, he keeps even a dried-up cow or she-buffalo tethered and feeds her. In a sense, he feeds her from his own portion. It would not be inaccurate to say that he toils like a beast of burden, in order to feed his cow or buffalo like a human being. That is why, on his body of a beast of burden, you will see so little flesh, and will be able to count his ribs. He will be burnt black by the sun, and his animals will be grazing in the shade. And he will not, even by mistake, grumble about these unequal dealings.

He is, of course, illiterate and to some extent in debt. He has no time to involve himself in the petty quarrels of the village, and if he does, who will do his labour for him? And probably on this account, no one pays any attention to him. His grievances, like himself, are small. If they are eliminated, he will not become rich, if they continue, he will not be ruined. He will keep on as he is and only keep on. He will neither run nor lie. This may be the cause of those problems of his that never vanish. If he sees someone a little urbanised, little respectable-looking, he will at once and emphatically tell him his troubles. Then, however much the respectable man may protest that he is not the man to help him, he will repeat the grievances again and again abjectly, with folded hands if need be, and if necessary, even clasping his feet in supplication, and will urge him to do something about it. He will also recite a list of the people he has told it to before. He will seem very ignorant because of his abject manner, and his helplessness makes him appear stupid.

BUT he is not. He understands a great deal—perhaps more than you or me. He has understood well that even if he tells his problems, they will not be solved; or, to come to the point, that they are never *going* to be solved. It will be apparent in the casualness with which he turns to his labours after you have taken leave of him. It will be clear in his wise and alert eyes, peering through those dark recessed caves of his, even as he behaves abjectly in front of you. No matter what happens, to tell of his complaints is not just a promise, it is a policy with him. What does it cost? It is the Hindu mind, doing *namaskars* to every lump of stone. The calculation is that one lump or the other will answer his prayer. And if it does not, then his affairs continue as they are. What does each *namaskar* cost?

This special 'face' (picture A) came of its own accord out of the fields as I was walking along the road in the scorching sun, and confronting me, poured into my ears some grievances about his land, with the greatest of respect, and as if I were an official of some sort. On my beginning to express polite sympathy, he repeated the same grievance in other words, and made a humble request to me to do something about it. I said, embarrassed, that I was not a government official. Apparently unconvinced, he repeated the grievance once more. I took a firm leave of him.

The next time I saw him, I hurriedly took off the woollen hat I was wearing, having formed the impression in the meantime that it was because of the hat that he had taken me for a government official. But he told my hatless self the same old grievances in as abject a manner as at first. I once again told him that I was not a government official and also informed him deliberately who I really was, to the extent he could understand. But nevertheless he began grinding out his grievances afresh. In spite of my saying no, whenever he meets me, he tells me his problems afresh. He does this even though he has learnt they are not solved, and he does not seem to mind that they are not solved. He bears no anger towards me. To his Hindu way of thinking, I must be another lump of stone. It will be a joy if I answer his prayer; if I don't he has by now become inured to doing his *namaskars* and singing the song of his grievances.

The boy from the Telengana village

NEXT to this "Eye" is a young boy (picture B) from the extreme hinterland of Telengana, along with his chickens. He had set out, with these chickens in a bag of wire netting, intending to sell them at the market. At my request he posed with them looking at the camera. But he was more interested in my photographing him than the chickens. The photograph he would never see, for there was no chance of

Picture B

my ever meeting him again. Never mind. He felt it an honour to be photographed at all. A special joy shone on his face because, among the many boys around, only he would be photographed.

Immediately he had seen the camera he had recognized its purpose and brightened up.

He had not been to school, was totally illiterate, and had never seen anything beyond his village; and there was not a *kachha* or mobile cinema within miles.

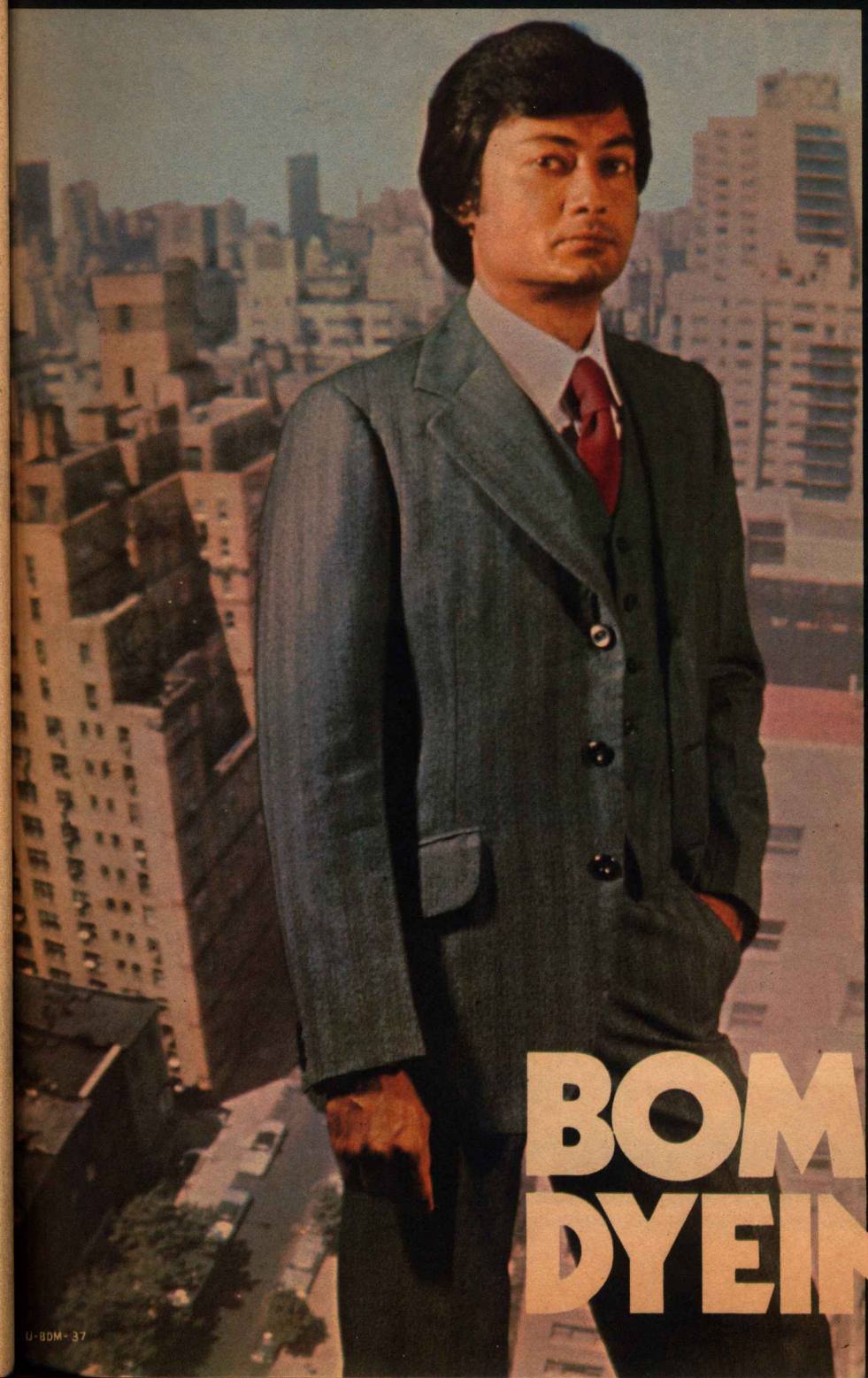
He kept hovering around me, and fawning on me. It was remarkable that he did not stop fawning on me even after I had taken his photograph. It was as if he was demonstrating to the others that a special relationship had been formed by the photograph between him and this extraordinary being. He looked with approval at the camera. The pathetic little chickens were a most mundane and boring subject compared to him.

His face cannot be seen properly in the slide. An attractive composition involving him and the chickens had loomed large in my mind and his face, therefore, became secondary. I was happy at having snapped a splendid "Picture". Now, when I project this slide on the walls his tattered shirt sleeve disturbs the aesthetic photographer in me. His skin that peeps through the sleeve, that has been beaten by sun and winds but remains tender and young, binds my gaze to itself. His soft, fuzzy, living hair, that has never known the touch of oil or comb, seems to ask me quietly, what is this boy's future? What will become of him hereafter? What opportunities are available to him? Pressing the projector catch, I hastily move the slide back.

The condemned prisoner of Yeravada

THIS MAN (picture C) is no longer alive. He has been hanged. People are hanged who commit such murders as have no forgiveness in the law. Some who are condemned are later reprieved from hanging and given life imprisonment instead. But this man was not reprieved. He made the most earnest efforts to get a reprieve, till the day before his hanging, and stayed awake the whole night waiting for the reprieve to come. But in the end, he was hanged. And even though he had been endeavouring till the end to avoid being hanged. In the last five minutes before the hanging, he took courteous leave of all who were present. He thanked all the officers and set off to be hanged. A man who had committed four horrific murders, he went to his hanging like a civilised man.

THE TALK OF THE TOWN



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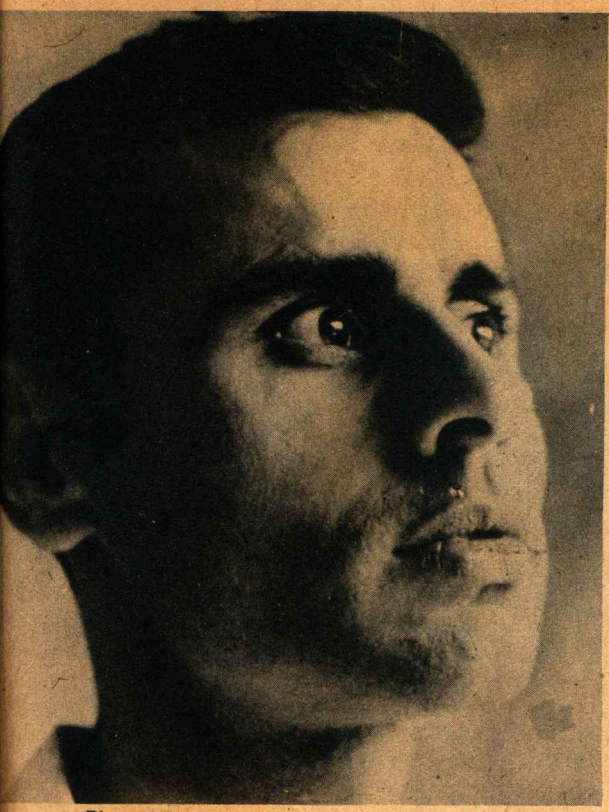


Picture C

This photograph was taken several months before the hanging. His clothes shown in it are not prison clothes, as it was his wish that he should not be photographed dressed in prison garments, and the prison officers felt the same. While being photographed, he had his glasses in his hand, though normally he wore them. He avoided wearing them just for this photograph. In spite of repeated suggestions he did not put them on. "There will be a glare over the eyes in the photograph," he explained, but the reason may have been different, and he alone knows it.

He very much wanted a recent photograph of his only daughter. He and his daughter never met. When I met him on the occasion before the one on which I took his photograph, in the hope of his cooperation, I had even promised to take one of his daughter and bring it to him. Later, at my meeting with him forty-eight hours before he was hanged, he reminded me of it. "You said you would give me that photograph but I knew you would not be able to. And that is what happened." I wanted very much to give him a fresh promise but there was not enough time left to fulfil it. I just smiled glumly, that was all. In that same meeting, in the middle of our conversation, he broke off while criticizing the growing violence in society and expressed his condolences at my mother's death. I don't know who gave him the news of my mother's death. And it was quite a long time since she had died. But he took me aback by observing the proprieties so unforgettingly and with such warmth.

The four murders he had committed had all been established in both the lower and upper courts. The prison officers were fully confident of his crimes. The investigating officers, too, believed completely in his guilt. He alone, from our first meeting, always maintained that he was innocent. Before he was hanged he asked for an interview with the magistrate, and these were his final words to him, that he was completely innocent.

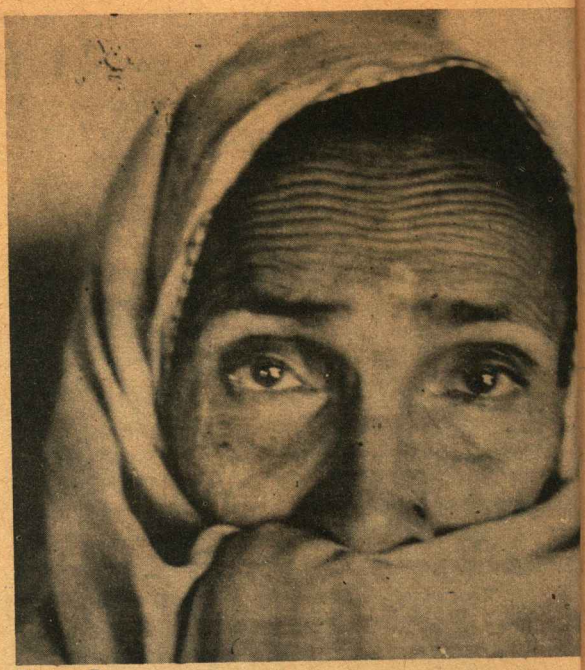
In one of the two photogrpahs of him taken out by me, he looks innocent to me. He often appeared so to me, because his behaviour and speech with me in the prison was gentle and persuasive. At the worst, it would become bitter, but he did not appear to bear rancour. He was also very understanding and cooperative when I took the photographs. At that time, if anyone had asked me, I would have said, he doesn't appear to be a murderer. But later, when looking at the slides, as the larger of these two photographs came into focus on the wall, I and the others with me were given a jolt. We all burst out: "The eyes—the eyes are different."

The eyes of my hanged friend in this photograph always make me profoundly uneasy. How did I not recognize them when taking the photographs? How did I not notice them before? He was sitting there like any ordinary man, posing in order to ensure a good photograph. Did his eyes, all unknown to himself, speak out his secret? How different a quality is buried under a personality that is outwardly gentle and civilized! Even today, when an enlarged image of this slide is projected on the wall, those eyes try to attack me. Brought to eerie life again by the slide, they seem to try to frighten one out of one's wits.

Mushahari, Bihar

IN THE environs of Muzaffarpur, Bihar, there is a small place called Mushahari. Here there was once a Naxalite revolt. Communications had

been established with the Naxalite leaders in West Bengal. Zamindars had been murdered. The Naxalites were hot-blooded youths from farm labourer's families. What happens politically to fairly alert minds when the pangs of extreme poverty afflict them, had happened to these young men. Later, the Zamindars themselves used these young men against each other. The Zamindars remained. Some Naxalites were killed; others went behind bars; still others vanished, some saying they had been killed, and some that they had merely fled the district. Later on, Jaya Prakashji went into that area, enquired after families that had been broken up, and speedily did whatever he could from his Sarvodaya point of view.



Picture D

The widow of the murdered Zamindar

WHILE I was roaming that area, I met, in an old mansion, the personified ruin shown in the photograph (picture D). She was the widow of a Zamindar murdered by Naxalites. The Zamindar had been crippled below the waist by disease. While he was sleeping one night in the verandah on a cot, eight Naxalite youths jointly finished him off with knives and daggers. He left behind only a married daughter and this widow. The married daughter was at her husband's house. This widow knew nothing about farming, business or anything. While her husband was alive, she had always lived in seclusion by her cooking-stove. Now the *Zamindari* had followed her husband into oblivion, and she was poverty stricken.

Only the mansion remained, and this widow, a coarse dhoti-like cloth wrapped about her stick-like frame, living in it like a ghost. One rarely meets a face that speaks so piercingly of its own crippled, anchorless, blind, penurious existence.

Picture E

A Dalit from the Mang locality

THIS elderly (picture E) belongs to a man of the Mang caste. He was sitting in a group in the Mang neighbourhood, tranquilly listening to the story of two men murdered there. This story was well known to him. He had also known the murdered men quite well. He sat, quietly listening to the story as it was being told to us. When I photographed the other men, I took a photograph of him too. I thought that the quiet endurance on his face was of great value, because it was representative. There was not, in this man the force of anger at those two murders, and even while listening to the story of them, he sat looking peacefully in front of him with eyes that seemed to be developing cataracts. These murders had been committed by several high caste men of the village, armed with staves and axes.

Picture F

The Mangs who had been murdered were straight-dealing men living by hard work. They had worked for a candidate of a higher caste group during the Zilla Parishad election. He was elected, and a rival group took revenge by making these two Mangs their victims, and concocted a false charge of robbery against them too. The police arrested the Mangs still living who were suspected of the robbery, but left the murder suspects at large. There had been no proper inquiry into the murders. The day after they occurred the sorrowful Mang locality went back to its task of breadwinning—even the women of the murdered Mang's families. If they were to sit and mourn, how could they eat? How could they feed their children?

The Mang had sat quietly listening to all this. Even after hearing it all, he did not utter an ungenerous word. He uttered no words at all. At some point he got up and left.

The man of high caste

THIS face (picture F) is also a rural one, but in comparison, looks very aggressive and purposeful. This man is of a high caste, by village standards, a rich and large-scale farmer, once the Sarpanch of the village. Now more or less an eccentric profligate, alertly preserving and extending his own interests through his force of will; fighting a court case against the present Sarpanch soley for the good name of his family. Speaking with great pride of his long-fought case.

The present Sarpanch was of lower social status and had risen by his own efforts. His talk was precise, business-like, and where it was required, very lucid. He was dexterous in judiciously carrying his own point even when his case was weak. An extraordinary mixture of deference and aggressive pride in his tone. The moment anyone laid a finger on his interests, his voice would remain the same, but his words raise a cobra-hood of trickery and calculating wiliness. It was not his chosen role in life to lose; he would always stand erect. When I was taking the photograph, he got ready and sat down to pose. When the slide was seen on the wall, he looked like a bird of prey.

* * *

These are just a few photographs; I have many more. They keep on increasing. A museum of faces is growing out of them. In the process a collection of many different lives is being made. Whenever one sits and looks at them, and finds something new, and the old impression fades away. One's thoughts find something to exercise themselves on. The subject is one alone, the people of this country. What other subject is so enormous and so wonderful? **THE END**

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Like flies to wanton boys, they kill them for their sport. While the hunter systematically decimates animal life from the planet, he devises a code to make himself respectable, so that it is still sportsmanship when he sticks the male pig in the guts. After all, says the author, it is his game!. . .

THE HUNTER'S CODE

By Keki N. Daruwalla

HUNTING, like any other "sport," is said to have its special code of ethics. And much is made of this code.

Hunters are a fairly self-righteous lot, some of whom think it unfair of the Pope not to have considered any of their ilk for canonization. There are, however, very few species, leaving aside the Papal bull, which they have not brought very close to extinction. Animal and bird life wilt away and die but the code still stands as if carved on granite.

Briefly the hunter's ethical code is as follows:

Don't shoot at the female of the species when they are either pregnant or with their young. Don't shoot in the mating season. Don't sit over water holes. Don't leave an animal wounded in the jungle whether it is a carnivorous cat or a limp stag. (Much in fact is made of this unwritten law and the highest form of compassion a hunter knows is to put such an animal to sleep. In other words, having maimed a stag, when the hunter pursues it and finally blows its heart out, he feels he is entitled to some sort of Buddhahood—pardon the scrambled metaphor in the hunter's Valhalla).

The hunter is also supposed to put some limitations on the scientific gadgetry at his command. It won't do to use a machine gun! That would tilt the balance unfavourably against the beast. As if the *machan*, the *hawda* securely tied on elephant back and a horde of beaters making a more frightful din than any beast in the world are not enough odds against Mr. Stripes or Mr. Spots. Or as if, for that matter, a dozen guns encircling a jheel before first light are not enough odds against the wintering duck.

I have heard hunters boast that there were so many teal, mallard and geeze at a particular lake that they never bothered to take any aim. They just pointed their guns at the sky and let go and with each shot about two birds fell. A time came when they could not touch the barrels, they had become so burning hot. So they kept firing with only one hand, which must have done their forearm muscles a deal of good.

"It was in stalking and in hunting that you had your fun," writes an old British *Burra* Sahib. "The actual shooting meant nothing really. The only thing was to kill outright." As long as you gave the blighter a barrelful in his heart or in his brain and knocked him stone cold everything was okay. You were on the up and up, old chap! Hence these tiger-hunting manuals spend considerable time in describing where exactly to get at the tiger: the neck, or better

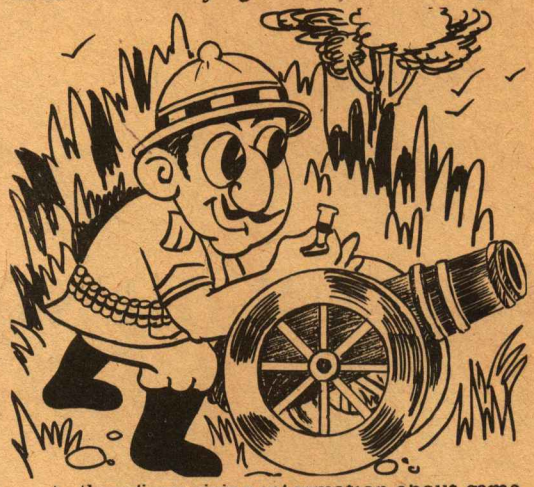
still the root of the neck, the heart through the shoulder, the heart through the chest. And lastly comes that classic shot which makes every genuine hunter's mouth positively salivate, the bullet placed squarely between the eyes. But even with this kind of a shot bliss can be adulterated with regret.

One hunter writes how he saw a huge pair of antlers, the rest of his body being hidden by a bush. He placed the bullet right where the head should have been. When he approached the dead stag what was his "disgust" to find that the antlers had broken in two. How cruel fate can be to have robbed him thus of the chance of displaying a fine stag-head with those arboreal antlers on the varanda wall. It never occurs to anyone, I presume, to think of whether the brute also felt "disgusted" at having his brains turned into a mess.

What I am trying to say is that too much is made of the hunter's code of conduct, which to the modern sensibility, appears irrelevant crap. Killing is precisely what hunting is all about. There is nothing which we homo sapiens cannot turn into a cult, no practise we cannot sanctify, no figure, animal or demonaic which we cannot apotheosize.

Caste systems

AMONG hunters there is also a caste system and gradations of contempt which one caste feels for another. The British hunter despised the local shikari. In the sahib's view, the shikari sat over salt licks and water holes. He was used to potting over does and fawns. He would not fire at anything which was not within twenty yards of his gun. If the sahib took a long shot and missed, laments Silver Hackle in his vintage book, *Jungle Lore*, the shikari would turn round and say that Sahib can't shoot a haystack. In his own jungle the shikari would pre-



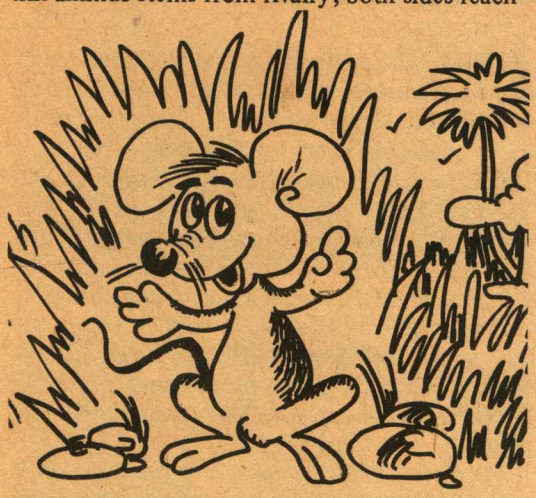
vent others from giving information about game. He lacked stamina over a long tiger shoots. He would get stale and would have to be kept happy with timely gifts at the end of the day to buy liquor with.

The shikari, in turn, had his own code of ethics. His first responsibility was to his stomach and the only thing he could kill for his pot was wild life. But he in turn despised the poacher. Talking to a shikari once who was railing against the poachers, I intentionally egged him on.

'There goes my breakfast!'

"No," I said, "I can't believe that poachers would come and slaughter a pregnant doe," *"Sahib, Kya bat kartan hain!* They would shoot your cow if they got the chance."

And this entire clan—hunter, shikari and poacher—detest the tribes who trap and net birds and even animals. But if you ever tell them that this animus stems from rivalry, both sides reach-



ing out for limited wild game, they will be outraged. The very concept of "rivalry" with trappers and netters would scandalise them. The killers will talk about sport, ethics, "cricket", the pleasures of the chase.

I once got a very irate letter from a man complaining about the netting of partridge in the Bah area in Agra. The Agra club served titar everyday of the week, every month of the year. Sordid, I would say. But the same gentleman who had sent me the letter in one of his earlier postings in the Chambal ravines in the early fifties had shot, I was told, as many as 1300 buck. Does it matter one bit to us now whether he shot them sitting over a ford in the Chambal, (which he didn't) or whether he slaughtered them according to all the laws of the chase and the highest canons of sportsmanship?

Joy of shooting

I WAS introduced to hunting, before I had got into my teens. It was in the company of a Nawab's family in Kathiawar, before Independence. Now they were no avid hunters indulging in mass scale slaughter of wild life. But they enjoyed a shoot. Jeeps had not come to Kathiawar till then and it was those remarkably sturdy British cars that were used for shoots. Two servants, known as "Pattawalas"—probably because of the faded red sash they wore round one shoulder—would, ridiculously enough, be standing on each side of the car, legs planted firmly on the footboards, that used to jut out in those days. Once the deer was spotted the chase began in earnest. The car would plough through fields and scrub and wasteland. The deer would take one, two, three sometimes five shots all over the body without going down. The spoor would be marked with little clotted pieces of its entrails and even cartilage shavings, and still be running thirty miles an hour.

On that terrain the cars could do no better. The deer were after all on their native heath. At times the stag or the hind got away and the thought of its insides all spray-gunned with lead did not leave me with much of a stomach for this kind of sport. And when the stag was brought down it would be worse. The car would stop and one of the pattawalas would leap out and get at the stag's throat with a knife in accordance with the Mosaic prohibition against eating the thing that died of itself. This bit was more difficult to witness because the deer would be looking at you right in the eye.

Of course when it came to shot birds, they were often dead long before the servants could

And the smile on the face of the tiger.

get at them. That never prevented them from going through with their ritual of frenzied knife-strokes across the windpipe and gullet. Once I saw a servant declare a bird dead before he could reach it, and then carefully hide the bird for his personal consumption. Which incident brings to mind the great Saadi's statement that "when a starving dog finds meat he inquires not whether it be Salih's camel or the ass of anti-Christ."

Though a decent princely family, they once showed us a picture of what they had done to a boar. Pig-meat of course was anathema to them. But they maltreated the body, drove a car over the carcass of the boar, and what is worse, filmed it.

Once a wild boar was somehow caught or trapped and was taken to the zoo. In true gladiatorial style it was thrown in the lion's cage and I am told that the nobility sat back licking their chops to see what the lion would do to the boar. It didn't. The lion had been in captivity for years. The boar was straight from the wilds. He grunted, lowered his head and made straight for the lion who after a semblance of a fight turned tail and ran. Round and round the cage the boar chased him, slashing him all over, till they had to shoot the boar in order to save the lion!

I am relating the above incident, only to show how hunting in all its forms put me off. During a long stint in the hills I was once presented with a male monal someone had shot. The monal is one of the most resplendent varieties of the Khaleej pheasant and is a protected bird at that. It was maddening.

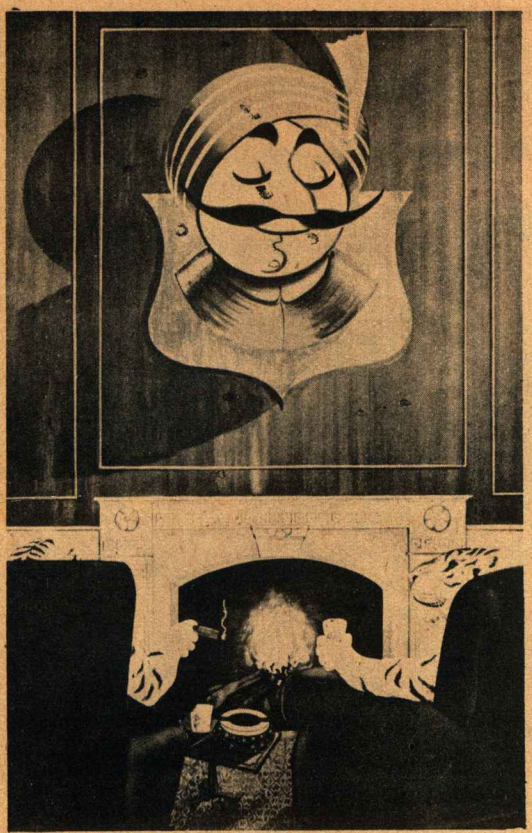
With the military and para-military forces moving into the hills a lot of wild species particularly the wild goat, the wild sheep and the *Thar*, are threatened with extinction. I know of an incident in the vicinity of Rimkhim which is indicative of how men and animals behaved when armed personnel first moved up. An Assistant Commandant of a certain force took his .303 rifle to his shoulder and let go at a mountain goat, and missed. The shot echoed and reached up and down the craggy mountains. The wild goat could not make out where the sound had emanated from as the roar of the gun reverberated among the hills. Perhaps because its experience of man had been happy so far, or which is more likely, because it was dazed by this whirlwind of menacing sound around it, it made straight for the man. The officer took four more shots at the goat and missed each time. Eventually when he found his magazine empty and the wild goat at handshaking distance from him he caught the rifle by the barrel and tried to club the goat to death with the butt. It was then that the animal got wise to him and fled away.

Hunting's toll

INDIA with its vast, unending forest tracts was a great reservoir of wild life. But hunting took its toll. One hears about the drives organized by Alauddin Khilji in the neighbourhood of Delhi. In one drive organized by Akbar near Lahore 15,000 animals are supposed to have been driven. Jehangir, who was meticulous about keeping his game score, has recorded that he killed in all 28,532 animals, including 86 tigers, 889 blue bull, 1372 deer, 36 wild buffaloes, 90 wild boars and 23 hares. He also killed 13,964 birds of which 10,348 were pigeons, 156 water fowl and the balance sparrows, doves, crows and owls.

A book *Things Indian*, published in 1906 gives an account of the ravages during the British period. "About 1780 one of the Lindsays in Sillet used to kill 60 to 70 tigers yearly." In ten years (1825-34) in Khandesh and Mewar Ben Outram was present at the death of 191 tigers, 15 leopards, 25 bears and 12 wild buffaloes. And the book mentions a "Sikh native officer" who was present at the deaths of 500 tigers. And yet its chapter on Shikar starts with the observation, "India is still the paradise of the sportsman of moderate means, where, as yet, no game laws and preservings interfere with his amusement." To think that this "amusement" has cost a continent its entire animal life!

But even as these massacres were going on, the 'code' always intruded. Pig sticking was considered the manliest of sports, and when I was posted to Meerut in the early sixties, I found that the army was continuing the tradition with a big 'meet' in the Khadir. But riding after sows was frowned upon. Now there you have a glimpse of the innate sense of British chivalry. Stick the pig and run him to earth but will the gentleman please stand up when the sow waddles in! And, please savour this bit from an early Twentieth Century book "Antelope hunting with the Cheeta has been a favourite amusement of native princes since the days of Akbar; but it is *very properly disliked* by Englishmen." Falconeering was similarly frowned upon. Beasts and



birds should not be encouraged to kill each other. Animal and bird slaughter should be the special preserve of mankind.

From the third decade of this century, the Englishman started feeling a little shamefaced about the killing. There was no end to the euphemisms they invented and the hedging they resorted to, to avoid the adage of a "Killer". As the recently published *Plain Tales from the Raj* would have us believe, it was the "surrounding of the shikar, the camp and the campfire mentality, which were more important to us than the actual killing of the animal."

Sher Jung in the fascinating *Tryst With Tigers* says, "Always remember that hunting is not just killing animals, it is much more than killing; killing is the least important part of it." That is like someone addicted to the bottle saying that alcohol is the least important thing about drinking; what matters is conversation, the chance to come together, the toasting, the swizle-stick, the crushed ice, the bitters.

Hunters I meet say that I talk like this because I have never hunted. Only a 'non-initiate' could talk like that. On that analogy one would have to shoot someone in order to write on murders, and kill oneself first for qualifying to write on suicides.

Mute spectators

AND yet is it fair to blame only the hunter and the trapper for bringing things to this pass? What about the people as a whole who have stood by over the centuries as disinterested observers of this gory spectacle? Every once in a while in the countryside one comes across a jheel where fish thrive or a village where the shooting of birds is taboo. No shikari dare come anywhere near, knowing the religious fervour of the people residing there. In such isolated pockets a little wild life is preserved: some green pigeon, crane, blue bull, even deer. But in general, just as the country was an invitation to the invader and the freebooter, our forests and scrub were a standing invitation to slaughter.

In a country where eighty per cent of the population lives, if one may borrow the expression, in the great outdoors, it is amazing to find a people so insensitive to the fate of bird and animal life. I do not think there could be a greater indictment of us Indians. Would uncivilized be the word for it?

This is more surprising in a country where as far back as the third century B.C. some semblance of wild life laws had been codified in Asoka's fifth edict wherein castration and caponing were forbidden and rules for the protection of living creatures were laid down.

At the turn of this century people had become aware of our diminishing wild life. That was the time for stringent laws. But that was precisely the time when the hunters took on the mantle of animal lovers and threw the whole blame on the poacher, the netter and the trapper. Through some perverse logic the brazen-faced audacity of which leaves one stunned, the hunters claimed that *they* were the real lovers of wild life. They alone could protect it. A generation believed them and was betrayed. The hunter's code boiled down to filling his pot with the flesh of wild animals and their walls with their skins and antlers and tusks. Meanwhile, a time is approaching when both the shikari and the trapper may become irrelevant, what with diminishing forests and the pollution of the atmosphere. The worsening environment may accomplish in fifty years what it took the hunter five hundred years to accomplish. **THE END**

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CHAITRA-SS-68

Great as the Steptoe-Edwards feat is, it should not give undue hope to all infertile women. But even if it is still in the stage of a scientific curiosity, it opens up a whole new vista in the medical field, such as babies of desired sex and cloning–all of which border on genetic engineering.

INSTANT BABIES

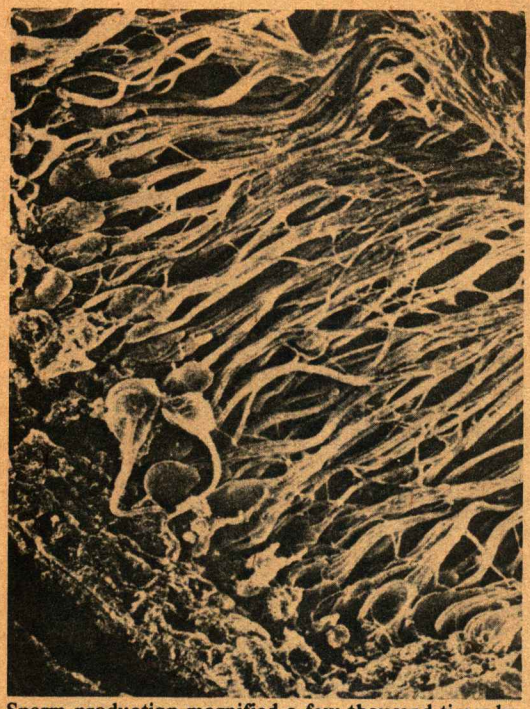
By Shivanand Karkal

ON JULY 27, 1978, the mass media of the world went as crazy as it had nearly nine years ago, when man first conquered the moon. This time, radio, television, satellite and all the other paraphernalia of communication were bringing news of yet another important conquest by man to the distant corners of the world. For man had successfully juggled with the first, tentative forces of life itself: British gynaecologist Patrick Steptoe and physiologist Robert Edwards had fulfilled a long-cherished dream, when Baby Louise Brown–the first baby in history to be conceived outside her mother's womb–was delivered by Caesarean surgery.

How did the Steptoe-Edwards team achieve this feat? Mrs Lesley Brown, who could not conceive normally because of damaged Fallopian tubes, was first treated with hormones to make her ovulate. Then, through a tiny incision just below her navel, an instrument called a laparoscope was passed to visualise her ovaries. Next, a hollow needle with a suction apparatus was inserted through the laparoscope, and a ripe ovum 'plucked' from one of the ovaries.

Sperms obtained from Mrs Brown's husband were maintained alive in a special nutrient culture, to which the ovum was added. The ovum was subsequently fertilised by one of the sperms (This is called 'in vitro' fertilisation–in vitro literally means in glass, or rather, in laboratory conditions, as opposed to 'in vivo', which means in body. In this case, the ovum was fertilised in a small glass vial). After this in vitro fertilisation, the resulting embryo, still only a tiny cluster of cells measuring hardly a tenth of a millimetre, was reimplanted in Mrs Brown's uterus. . . and nearly nine months later, pink, blond, blue-eyed, 5 lbs, 12 oz. Louise Brown was born. . .

Therefore, it can be seen why the term 'test-tube' baby is a misnomer–experts point out that the very idea of 'growing' a whole baby in a test-tube is a ridiculous one. What *has* been achieved is a successful in vitro fertilisation, and more important, the successful carrying to term of this artificial conceptus. The first successful in vitro fertilisation, with rabbit ova and sperms, occurred in 1936 and was carried out by Dr Gregory Pincus of Harvard University. In 1944, another Harvard scientist, Dr John Rock repeated the feat with human sperm and ova. In 1961, Dr Daniele Petrucci of the University of Bologna, electrified medical authorities by claiming to have fertilised as many as 20 human ova in vitro. (Dr Petrucci was supposed to have stopped experimentation after incurring the Church's displeasure. He disappeared in 1971, and now, in the wake of news of the first 'test-tube' baby, his children have asked any couples the mysterious Dr Petrucci helped have 'test-tube' babies, to 'come forward so that he could get recognition')



Sperm production magnified a few thousand times by electro-microscope.

It was in the early sixties that Dr Steptoe began his pioneering use of the laparoscope, particularly in picking up ova from the ovaries of mothers-to-be and then, reimplanting them in the uterus. Dr Edwards was simultaneously devising suitable chemical solutions (culture media) in which an ovum could be fertilised as maintained in a healthy state before Dr Steptoe could transfer it to the mother's womb.

It has indeed been a long grind since then: in 1970, the team succeeded in growing the in vitro fertilised ovum to the 8 and then the 16-celled stage; in 1975, they succeeded in persuading the uterus to nurture the transplanted ovum till ten weeks of pregnancy, after which, unfortunately, the patient had a miscarriage; and in 1978, they brought to full term, the first human pregnancy of a baby conceived in a laboratory glass vial—the crowning glory of a 13-year-old saga.

While moralists questioned the ethics of 'test-tube' life and prophesied darkly about the results of opening such a Pandora's box, the news was welcomed gladly by nearly every section of the medical community all over the world.

Dr V.N. Purandare, an eminent Indian gynaecologist said, "There's no doubt about it: the Steptoe-Edwards feat is a marvellous one, a great advance for medical science—and anyone who doesn't agree is either biased or a religious fanatic! According to me, the real triumph, however, is Edwards'—removing an ovum from an ovary is child's play, virtually any gynaecologist can do it. . but then any gynaecologist would not know what to do with it afterwards! It was Edwards who devised those culture media to keep the fertilised ovum alive and dividing it normally!"

Dr D.N. Patel, Dean of Bombay's Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital, said, "It's a great achievement of course, but every barren woman shouldn't feel that the Edwards-Steptoe feat will solve her problem. It will be of tremendous benefit only to those women whose infertility is due to irreparably damaged Fallopian tubes, for even though we have a number of operative procedures to repair such tubes, the post-operative fertility results aren't too good. Infertility can be due to many causes, and damaged tubes is just one such cause. We've got something for nearly every other cause except this and the new technique should be of definite benefit to such patients. But I don't think it would be established as a routine line of treatment for many more years to come; after all, Steptoe and Edwards are the only two scientists in the world working on it now—and they've not disclosed their methods yet. And you musn't forget the sophistication, the gadgetry and the finance involved. . ."

Similarly, while agreeing that is a 'great scientific advance', Dr Shanta Rao, head of Bombay's Institute for Research in Reproduction (IRR), said, "I doubt its practicability in a country like India. Further, even with a technique like this, one cannot be absolutely certain about being able to duplicate natural environment. At this stage of our knowledge, it would be difficult to rule out abnormalities which might occur in such 'test-tube' babies. They will therefore have to be carefully followed up. I know Dr Edwards very well and I have great admiration for him as a scientist. Of course, one wouldn't want to take away any of the glory from the Steptoe-Edwards' feat: it's a great scientific achievement. . . On the other hand, it should not give undue hope to infertile women that the problem of infertility has been solved—it is still a scientific curiosity, and even when it becomes practicable in much less sophisticated conditions, the technique will only help women with blocked tubes."

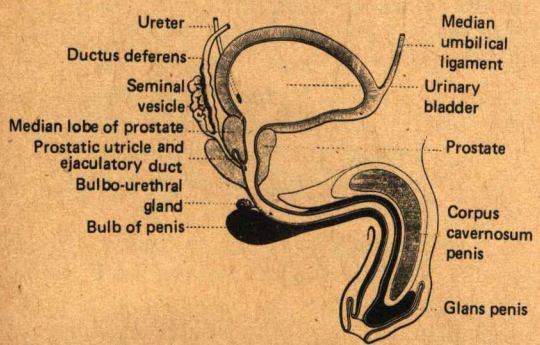
I – The Steptoe-Edwards feat

TO GAIN an insight into the significance of the Steptoe-Edwards achievement, we need to briefly review the physiology of human reproduction.

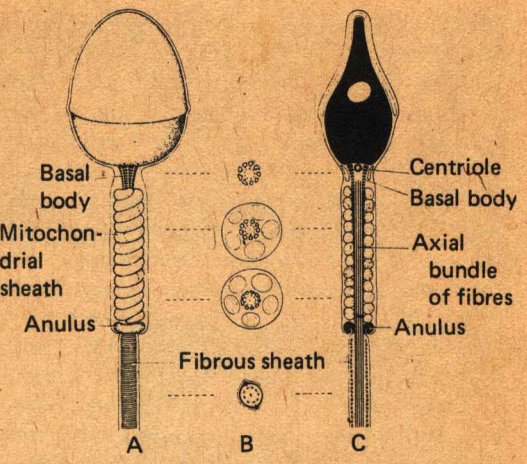
The male reproductive cells ('sperms') are produced by the two external genital organs ('testes'). Passing through various phases of development and nourished by certain secretions, the sperms are transported from the testes by a tubular system and finally voided in the semen. Even after ejaculation, the sperms have to undergo still further development in the female reproductive tract ('capacitation') before they are capable of entering the female reproduction cell, or ovum.

In the female, the reproductive system consists of the two ovaries (which produce the ova), the fallopian tubes of the uterus, the uterus proper and the cervix leading to the vagina and other external genitalia. Under the influence of hormones secreted by the pituitary, a tiny pear-shaped organ situated at the base of the brain, women have certain cyclic physiological changes every month, or rather every 28 days. This, the menstrual cycle, is governed by the pituitary hormones which have two 'targets', the ovaries, and the uterus. The menstrual cycle 'prepares' the uterus for the implantation of an ovum if it is fertilised. At the beginning of every cycle, certain cells from the inner lining of the ovary, called the germinal epithelium, begin growing and ultimately, one of them, which has grown the biggest and fastest, ripens to form a mature ovum. About the middle of the menstrual cycle, the surface of the ovary ruptures and the ripe ovum is liberated ('ovulation').

The ends of the fallopian tubes are provided



The male genital tract. Sperm produced by the testes are transported by vas deferens and finally voided in the semen.



A sperm cell with its pointed head and long tail.

with tiny hair-like processes (fimbriae') which engulf the ovum and tuck it inside the tubes. The cells of the inner lining of the tubes have undulating hair called cilia which gently propel the ovum towards the uterus proper. Now, if intercourse has occurred, some of the sperms deposited in the vagina swim through the cervix, up into the uterus and then into the tubes. Somewhere along the tubes, one lucky sperm bores its way through the outer coating of the ovum and fuses with it. This is called fertilisation, and the fertilised ovum is called the zygote.

Within a day of fertilisation the zygote divides into two, then into four, then eight, then sixteen. . . and by the end of the third or fourth day, a solid bag of cells called the morula is formed. Further divisions convert the morula into a fluid-filled 'blastocyst'. Tiny finger-like 'villi' grow out from the embryo and anchor it to the inner lining of the uterus.

This inner lining, the endometrium, has to prepare itself for receiving, anchoring and nourishing the embryo. Therefore the cells of the endometrium pass through two phases—a proliferative phase under the influence of a hormone called estrogen (when the cells increase markedly in number) and a secretory phase under the influence of another hormone called progesterone when the cells accumulate more and more nutritive substances to nourish the future embryo. (If conception does not occur, these first two phases are followed by the third phase of menstrual bleeding—when the disappointed endometrium completely sheds its specially prepared surface. One textbook therefore rather poetically describes the menstrual period as the

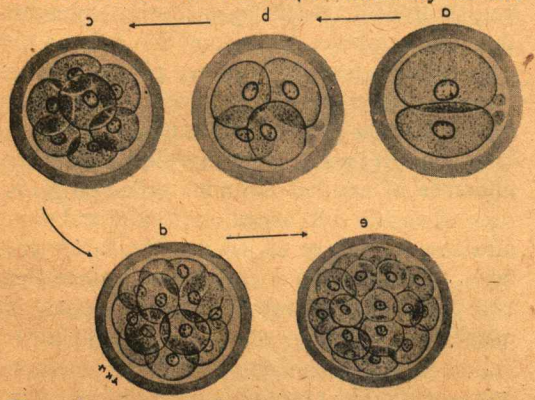
uterus crying in grief over the loss of an unfertilised ovum!)

Now that we have discussed the process of fertilisation, we can begin to understand what really the Steptoe-Edwards team has achieved—the successful progression of the following chain of events: Phase I – the ripe ovum has to be picked up from the woman's ovary at the right moment when it has completely matured, then the ovum has to be removed and maintained in conditions as similar to the environment it is used to as possible; Phase II – sperms have to be collected and maintained in conditions similar to physiological conditions in the male, treated with substances to nourish them and make them undergo 'capacitation' (which they normally do only in the female reproductive tract); Phase III – fusion of sperm and ovum (the actual fertilisation) and keeping the zygote alive and dividing normally till it passes through the morula and then into the blastocyst stage.

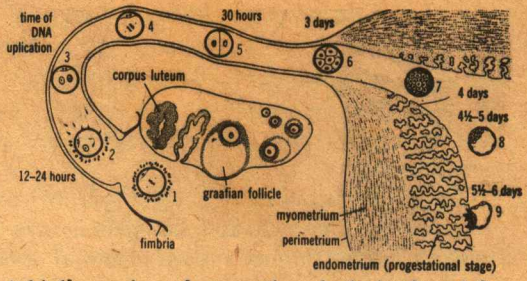
So much for fertilisation. But for Edwards and Steptoe, their task had not really begun till then: they still had to ensure that the uterus, which would ultimately receive the artificially fertilised ovum would not reject it, but would, on the other hand, allow it to burrow into itself and nourish it, prior to the long nine-month haul to Baby Louise. Mrs Brown therefore had to be given hormones which would duplicate the changes of the normal menstrual cycle.

To ensure that everything goes with clockwork precision at each stage is obviously a Herculean task. And the fact that Edwards and Steptoe achieved it after more than a decade of painstaking research, and 80 futile tries at reimplantation of the fertilised ovum, speaks for itself.

Perhaps the biggest hurdle was ensuring that the fertilised ovum developed normally till the



The various stages the fertilised ovum undergoes before forming a morula and finally the blastocyst.



A bird's eyeview of conception clockwise from left: a mature ovum is released by the ovary, picked up by the fimbria of the Fallopian tubes, sperms swim towards the ovum and one of them fertilises it, fertilised ovum goes through various stages of division before it is implanted in the uterus.

blastocyst stage (containing nearly 100 cells) and then implanting it in the uterus. Dr Steptoe had tried doing this before, but had failed to make the implanted blastocyst grow as in a normal pregnancy. Recent research in monkeys indicated that a zygote as small as a two-celled one might manage to exist and thrive in the uterus. Therefore the two scientists reimplanted the zygote into Mrs Brown's womb when it was only at the eight-cell stage. The trick worked: the eight-celled zygote grasped the endometrium of Mrs Brown's uterus firmly and continued to develop normally. . . till nine months later, Baby Louise was delivered by Caesarean section!

II – Hope for childless couples?

BEFORE understanding how the Steptoe-Edwards technique will benefit childless couples, let us consider the causes of infertility. This is a serious problem in a country like India, where it occurs in as many as 15% of all marriages. Experts estimate that in about 40% of infertile couples, the cause is the male, whereas in the remaining cases, either the wife or both husband and wife are affected. Fertility counselling therefore involves the treatment of the couple as a whole. In many cases, the cause of childlessness may be sexual problems like impotence, frigidity and wrong techniques, which can be solved with the help of psychiatric and other experts.

The husband's examination usually centres around a 'Semen-analysis'—a laboratory test to check the volume of ejaculate, and microscopic examination to assess the number of sperm per millilitre (sperm count), their mobility and the presence of any abnormal forms. Male infertility can be attributed to either of two important

causes–faulty sperm production or faulty sperm transmission.

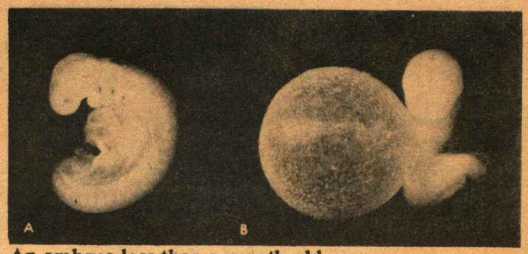
Faulty sperm production may be due to non-development or maldevelopment of the testes, thyroid diseases and infective illnesses like gonorrhoea and mumps. Prolonged high temperature, occupational diseases (as in boiler attendants) or after-diseases like typhoid can also hamper sperm production. Excessive pressure due to tight underclothing or hydrocele (collection of fluid around the testes) has the same effect. Severe malnutrition and vitamin deficiency can adversely affect sperm count. Varicose veins within the scrotum leading to what is known as varicocoele–an operable condition–is yet another cause. Too much of sex can also cause disturbed sperm count. Experts point out that sperm require at least 24 hours before ejaculation for maturation, and therefore, paradoxically, frequent intercourse is not advised to such patients.

Faulty transmission of sperms is due to an obstruction anywhere in the male reproductive system, which could be due to infections like tuberculosis or gonorrhoea, or after certain operations, or after trauma to the spinal cord, or as a result of a congenital defect.

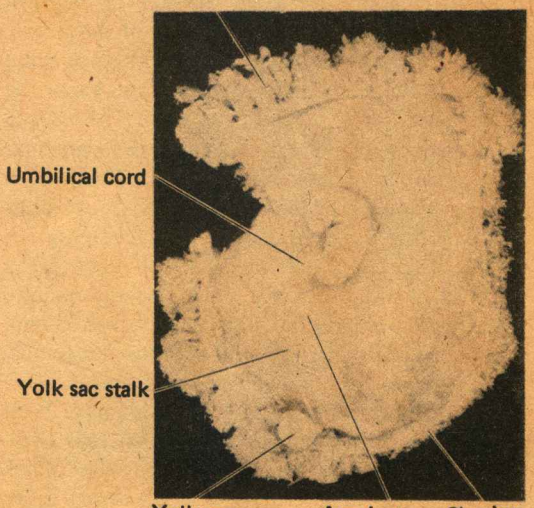
The wife is also carefully checked for any pathology in her vagina, cervix, uterus, tubes or ovary. Congenital abnormalities of the vagina, vaginismus (a painful spasm of muscles around the vagina during coitus), congenital deformities or the cervix, presence of growths, infection and excessive mucus (which prevents sperm penetration) in the cervix, tumours and infection of the uterus–any of these can cause barrenness in a woman.

The Fallopian tubes which serve the important function of picking up the ovum from the ovaries, transporting it inside them, permitting fertilisation and then conveying the fertilised ovum to be implanted in the uterus proper, can be affected by diseases like tuberculosis or gonorrhoea. Pus might accumulate in the tubes ('pyosalpinx') and destroy them partially or totally. Fibrosis can occur and block the tubes, thus hampering their function. Even if they are not blocked, disease might destroy the cilia lining the tubes, which markedly reduces their efficiency (Mrs Brown suffered from such a problem).

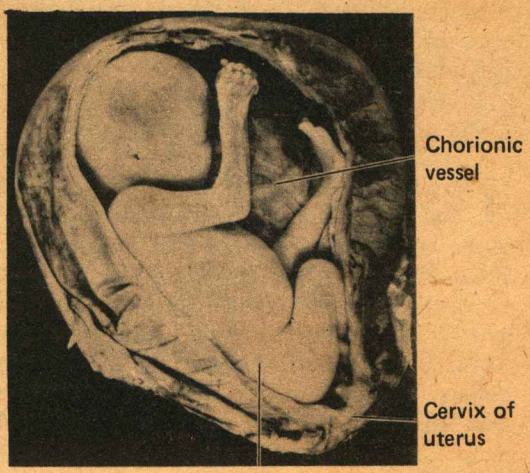
Besides such local causes, female infertility can also be due to various endocrine disorders, malnutrition and vitamin deficiency. Some women develop antibodies to their husbands' sperms. Such couples are advised abstinence for 6 months (after which antibody levels drop) or the use of a condom and later on, intercourse only during the fertile periods.



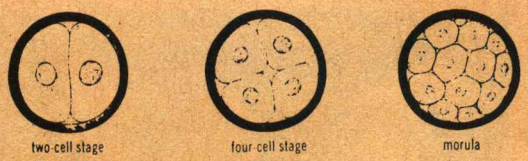
An embryo less than a month old.



A six week old embryo.



A 23-week old foetus.



The zygote from the two-cell stage to the morula stage.

The treatment of female infertility is aimed at correcting dietetic deficiency (if any) and diagnosing and eliminating any local pathology.

Many tests have been devised to diagnose blocked or damaged tubes. In one of them, called Rubin's test, air or carbon dioxide is injected into the uterus. This gas will escape from the uterus only if the tubes are open. This escape can be demonstrated either by a drop in pressure in a manometer connected to the gas source, or by a gurgling sound heard by a stethoscope placed over the abdomen, or by its accumulation under the patient's diaphragm, when she gets a pain at her shoulder-tips. When a radio-opaque material is similarly injected, a 'Hysterosalpingograph' is got, which clearly outlines the female reproductive system.

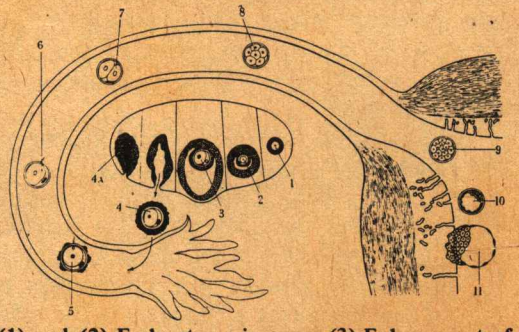
A number of surgical techniques have been utilised to treat tubal pathology. However these give poor results as far as correcting the infertility is concerned. Therefore it is in such cases, and such cases alone, experts stress, that the 'test-tube' baby technique will help barren women conceive. Even so, many years are likely to elapse before gynaecologists in other parts of the world are able to repeat the Steptoe-Edwards technique as a matter of routine.

III – Other Implications

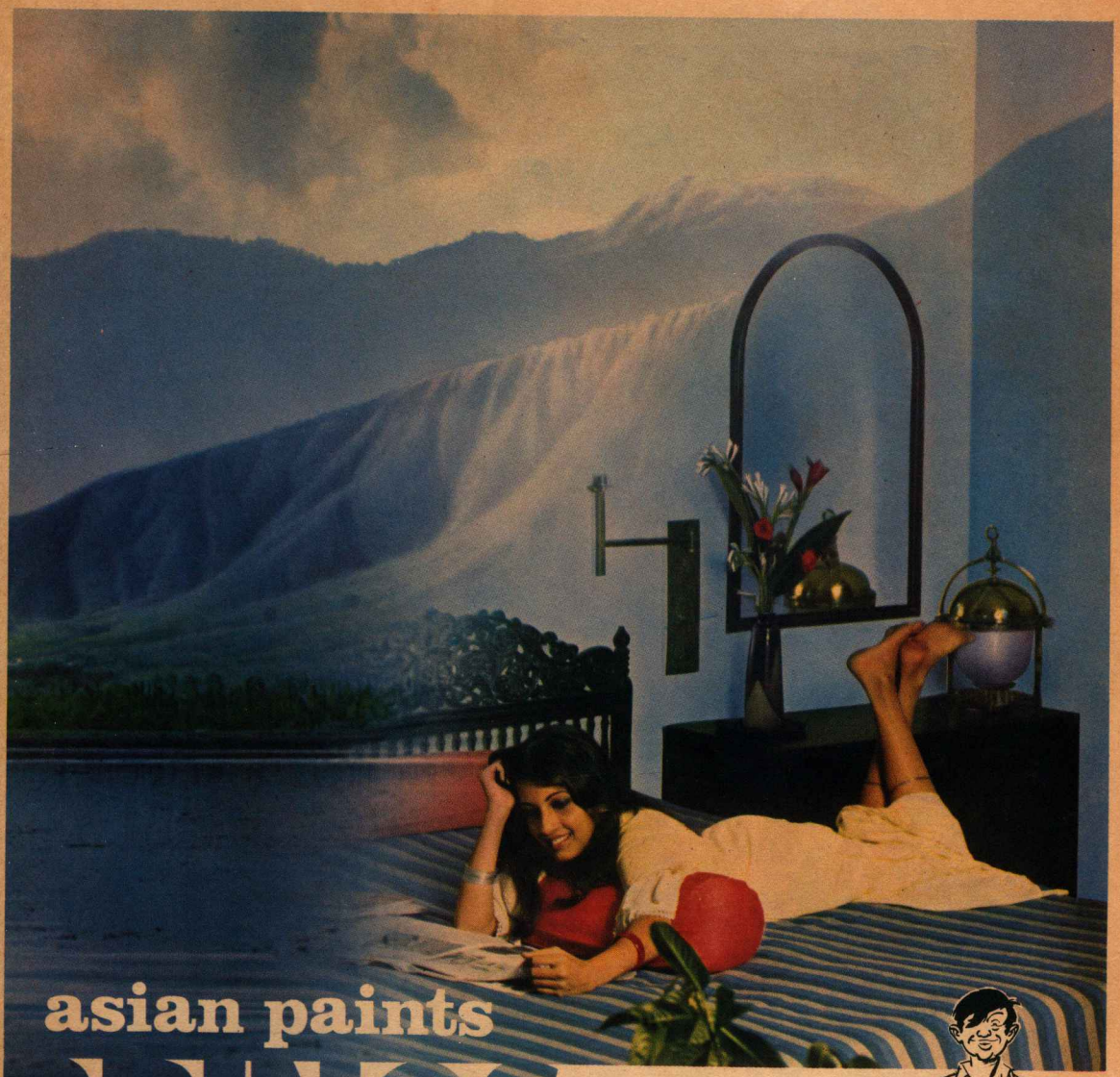
THE test-tube baby has thrown up a number of legal, medical and ethical questions. By queer coincidence, a week just before Luise Brown was born, John and Doris Del Zio were suing Dr Raymond Vande Wiele, head of the gynaecology-obstetrics department of New York's Presbyterian Hospital for 1.5 million dollars in an American Court. The plaintiff's plea–Dr Wiele had caused her great physical and mental damage when he opened a laboratory container with a fertilised ovum meant to be transferred to Mrs Zio's uterus. Dr Wiele's stand is that he had to prevent what he thought was a scientifically ill-conceived experiment, conducted by two of the Hospital's doctors without requisite permission. The question that loomed large among the legal tangle: would the jury decide that Mrs Zio's suffering was due to her ovum being destroyed by Dr Wiele or not? If they did, scientists fiddling with ova (and sperms) in the future would have to think twice about the legal consequences of their act.

In a roughly 30 years' span of reproductive life, a woman produces about 400 mature ova, most of which (obviously) go 'waste'. The sperm waste is still more enormous. Now, if the Steptoe-Edwards technique can be utilised to obtain human embryoes, can scientists put them to research purposes? Put baldly like that, it does sound revolting. In many different branches of medicine currently, animal embryoes like chicks, are being used. But human ones would definitely be superior–to cite but one instance, test-tube embryoes could be thoroughly studied as to the effects of various drugs and other disease-causing agents. Such knowledge would be of tremendous benefit in conducting normal human pregnancies in future.

Considering the terrific wastage of human reproductive cells and the fact that test-tube embryoes cannot yet be maintained till an advanced stage when life can be said to have 'begun', such research would be feasible without violating moral principles. But then who's to decide when that microscopic conglomeration of chemicals in the test-tube begins to live? What about the 'parents' who donated their sperm and ova in the first place? Would they allow



(1) and (2) Early stages in ovary (3) Enlargement of ovum and ovarian follicle: formation of first polar body. (4) Mature ovum surrounded by zona pellucida and corona radiate, extruded from ovary by rupture of ovarian follicle. (4A) Corpus luteum, early stage. (5) Fertilisation ovum in ampullary part of uterine tube: male and female pronuclei present. Note the tail of the spermatozoon outside zona pellucida. (6) Segmentation nucleus. (7) Two-cell stage. Note diminished size of cells. (8) Eight-cell stage. (9) Morula. (10) Blastocyst free in uterine cavity. Note formative mass (11) Zona pellucida has disappeared: torphoblast has thickened over embryonic pole, and implantation process has begun.



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such research to be carried out?

Perhaps the Doubting Thomases have a point—the Steptoe-Edwards technique may generate more problems than the one it set out to solve.

IV – 'Test tube' baby boy – or girl?

ANOTHER fascinating aspect of reproduction-research is aimed at determining the sex of the unborn baby, and as a corollary, devising a method by which parents-to-be could have a baby boy or baby girl, as they want. For ages, the nine-month-long suspense centering around the familiar jingle, "Will it be a boy? Will it be a girl?" has taken its toll of prospective parents. Now scientists are trying to eliminate even this little element of uncertainty about childbirth, so that, if all goes well, one day in the misty future, there will not only be test-tube babies but test-tube baby boys and baby girls, as the parents' choice may be!

To understand how scientists may one day work this miracle, it is necessary to realise what it is that makes a man a man and a woman a woman. The human body possesses two basic types of cells—somatic cells (soma=body) which are concerned with bodily functions, and reproductive cells which are concerned with reproduction. Now the nuclear material in all these billions of cells is compressed in the form of microscopic structures called chromosomes. Every somatic cell of the body has 46 such chromosomes, in the form of 23 pairs, 23 being the legacy from each parent. But the reproductive cells, that is sperms and ova, have only 23 chromosomes each. One of these is known as the sex chromosome, as it determines the sex of a person.

The sex chromosomes are termed the X and Y chromosomes. The Y chromosome is called the male chromosome because its presence indidates a genetic male. Thus, in a man, every somatic cell will have one pair of sex chromosomes, which will be made up by one X chromosome and one Y chromosome. But in a sperm, there will be only one sex chromosome, either X or Y, never both. On the other hand, in a woman, all somatic cells will have one pair of sex chromosomes consisting of *two* X chromosomes and each of her ova will have only one X chromosome. It is therefore easy to see why a man's genetic formula is said to be XY, and why a woman's is XX.

Now, if a sperm with a Y chromosome unites with an ovum, the resulting combination will be XY (X from ovum, Y from sperm) which means the embryo will be genetically a male. But if a sperm carrying an X chromosome fertilises the ovum, the embryo's genetic formula will be XX, that is, female.

Therefore it appeared to scientists that if babies with predetermined sex were to be born, all they had to do was ensure that the right kind of sperm did the fertilisation. X-sperm (the 'female' sperm) and Y-sperm (the 'male' sperm) had therefore to be separated, and only their selective use in fertilisation would yield babies of the desired sex. Unfortunately, such a facile separation, though hypothetically feasible, proved a hard nut to crack in the laboratory.

A few months ago, however, three scientists working at Bombay's Institute of Research in Reproduction (IRR) reported a method to achieve this purpose in the prestigious British scientific journal, 'Nature'. Though their experiments did not yield a 100% separation of the X and Y-sperms, the IRR research can be taken as an indication of future progress in this sphere. Theoretically, if the two kinds of sperm can be totally separated, an ovum can be fertilised by an X or a Y-sperm using the Steptoe-Edwards technique, outside a woman's uterus and the resulting embryo can be re-implanted. . . to get a 'test-tube' baby boy or girl, depending on what the parents wanted. Or, the technique of artificial insemination can be used for the same pur-

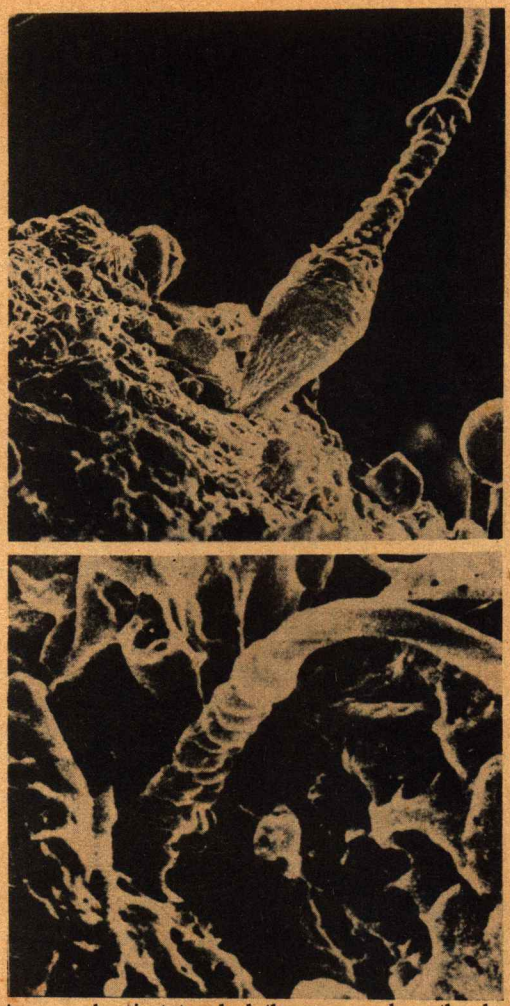
pose, if the woman can ovulate and conceive normally.

When Dr Shanta Rao, one of the three IRR scientists and also head of the same Institute, was interviewed, she pointed out that such research had many practical applications not only in the field of human reproduction, but also in other fields like animal husbandry. She cited the instance of prize female calves being produced, at will virtually, as a result of applying this technique to cows and buffaloes. However, a lot of further research needs to be done before a foolproof method can be devised for human application.

Scientists may not have perfected sperm-separation yet but they *have* devised a technique to diagnose an unborn baby's sex long before it is born. This is called 'amniocentesis' and consists of draining a few millilitres of watery fluid (called the amniotic fluid) that surrounds the foetus in the womb. Cells shed off from the foetus find their way into this amniotic fluid, and these cells can be withdrawn through a small incision made in the mother's abdomen. Microscopic examination of such cast-off cells follows. If the foetus is female, then each of these cells will have an XX composition, whereas if it is male, it will have an XY composition.

In the cells of a female foetus, the second X chromosome (being redundant as only one X chromosome is necessary for normal life) is 'inactivated' and condensed into a tiny dot called the Barr-Bertram body. This Barr-Bertram body can be clearly seen under the microscope in the cells drawn off by aminocentesis, if the foetus is female. Absence of this body however indicates that the foetus is male. Unfortunately, amniocentesis cannot be performed routinely just to satisfy parents' curiosity about their baby's sex: the technique is not totally accurate and is not absolutely safe for the mother.

What then, the layman will ask, is the use of either knowing baby's sex beforehand, or of predetermining it? Part of the answer lie in 'sex-linked' hereditary diseases. These diseases are caused by faulty genes which are either situated on the X chromosome or the Y chromosome. Therefore, only males, or only females suffer from such diseases. For instance, a disease called hemophilia (in which victims bleed profusely from the tiniest injuries) affects only males, whereas females act as 'carriers' of the faulty gene, which is transmitted by mothers to their sons.



A sperm has just touched the ovum and another has entered with its head. When the sperm is fully submerged, the genetic material is set free.

Amniocentesis has also been used to diagnose many congenital anomalies and metabolic diseases. Thus if the baby's sex is known beforehand, many of its defects—genetic or otherwise—can be diagnosed, and it can either be aborted, or treatment can be instituted even while it is in the womb (scientists have been working on this aspect too) or treatment can be started as soon as the baby is born, so that it does not suffer any long-term effects.

V – 'Test-tube' babies – and Cloning

WE NOW come to 'cloning', which to the layman at least might sound too much like a science-fiction scenario to be taken serious-

ly. Promoters of this technique would wax eloquent over its potential. Some day in the future, men and women will be churning out exact replicas of themselves, called 'clones'. . . Great poets, great artists, composers, scientists... you name them, hundreds will be created, virtually at the touch of a button!... In keeping with the trend of this article, however, let us not get carried away by such soap-bubble fancies, and instead attempt a sober appraisal of Cloning.

'Cloning' comes from a Greek word 'klon' meaning a twig or slip. It refers to a form of asexual reproduction common in lower forms of life, like certain plants.

We have seen before that an embryo results after fertilisation because of the ovum's division and re-division, countless times. Before fertilisation, the ovum possesses only 23 chromosomes, but after fusion with the sperm, this number doubles to 46. This doubling appears to be the trigger factor for the previously quiescent ovum to venture into all those innumerable divisions, which ultimately yield an embryo.

Scientists wondered whether this trigger factor could be manipulated, without actually fertilising the ovum, but still making the ovum 'think' that it had been. How could the ovum be tricked into believing that it had been fertilised? Simple, by removing its 23-chromosome nucleus and replacing it with a 46-chromosome nucleus. And where could such a nucleus be found? Why, any somatic cell would do. That is how cloning came to the laboratory: take an ovum, remove its nucleus, replace it with a nucleus taken from a body cell. . . and watch it divide and divide to form an embryo!

In practice, however, scientists found it a difficult task to actually work out such a chain of events. In the early 1950s, American biologists Robert Briggs and Thomas King did pioneering work in animal cloning. Unfertilised ova were obtained from female frogs and their nuclei were excised. They were then substituted by nuclei got from fertilised frog ova. It was gratifying to note that, even though ova had not been actually fertilised, they 'thought' they had been because of the transplanted nuclei, burst into the normal furious bout of cell division . . . and hey presto! developed into tadpoles.

A decade later, a British biologist, John Gurdon, duplicated this feat. In his experiments, he utilised nuclei taken from the inner lining of the intestines of young tadpoles. The nuclei of unfertilised frog ova were dsetroyed by ultraviolet radiations and the intestinal cell nuclei (each containing 46 chromosomes) were implanted in their place. The result was startling: frogs exactly similar to the 'donors' from whose intestines the nuclei had been removed! In other words, a 'clone' of frogs.

To understand why a clone is an exact replica of the donor, it must be remembered that any organism (plant, animal or human) has characteristics which are determined by the genetic make-up of its somatic cells. Progeny resulting from sexual reproduction has a mixture of characteristics, some from each parent, precisely because there is a genetic mix-up after fertilisation. But in cloning, fertilisation is bypassed and all 46 chromosomes come from only one 'parent'. Therefore every member of the resulting clone will be similar in the minutest details to the individual from whom the 46-chromosome nucleus was taken.

However, scientists are trying out the cloning technique in a somewhat circuitous way with mice. American biologist Clement Markert recently initiated a new technique utilising just-fertilised mouse ova. He carried out microscopic surgery on them to separate the two parental sets of chromosomes (at a stage when both sets are present in the fertilised ovum in the form of the male and female 'pronucleus').

Thus, Markert removed one of the two pronuclei and then induced the other pronucleus to duplicate itself under the influence of a certain chemical. Due to this duplication, the ova regained their full 46-chromosome quota. Consequently, they divided and the resulting embryoes were implanted in the uterus of female mice.

What about human cloning? Last March, it will be remembered, a book titled *In His Image* had announced the birth of a cloned baby—'the first human clone'—from a 67-year-old millionaire. This fraudulent claim has since been roundly denounced by scientific authorities who pointed out that it had still a very long way to go before human cloning became possible.

Cloning could be of immense use in improving the pedigree of livestock, and so on—this is a potential benefit that must be kept in mind. Human cloning, however, bristles with certain medical problems. For instance, man is prone to many diseases caused by what are called 'recessive' genes. These recessive genes are usually eclipsed by 'dominant' genes. If an individual receives such a recessive gene, so long as he also receives the dominant gene from the other

parent, he does not suffer from the disease. But when both parents pass down one recessive gene each to any of their progeny, the hapless receiver cannot escape its clutches. Inbreeding increases the likelihood of such defective genes surfacing more frequently. Scientists point out that human cloning could also have a similar drawback.

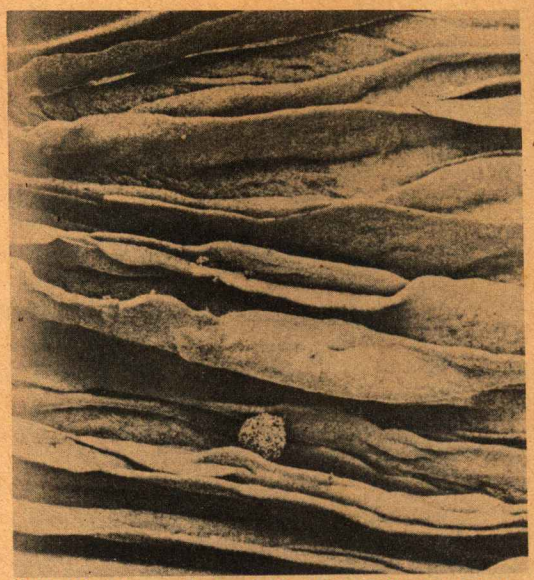
There is, however, a disquieting thought: cloning would give us countless Einsteins, Beethovens et al and (presumably) a Golden Era, a Utopia of the Super Race, would be ushered in by so many great beings. . . but cloning could also unleash the fury of countless Hitlers (see box) . . . And anyway, what would be so great about Einstein if we could churn out millions like him?. . . No wonder scientists' attitude to cloning is—good enough for plants, good enough for animals. . . but as for Homo sapiens, a dubious shake of head. . .

VI – Whither technology?

FINALLY, let us consider 'genetic engineering' or rather, the 'recombinant DNA' (Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid) technique, which can be briefly explained thus: scientists remove fragments of DNA from certain bacteria, use enzymes to slice these fragments at different 'sticky' points, then attach artificial genes at the 'sticky' points, and finally bind this artificial-gene-bacterial-DNA combination firmly into place. This 'recombinant DNA' is finally put back into bacteria. Whenever these bacteria multiply, the DNA they contain is duplicated. In this way, the transplanted genes become an integral part of the bacterial DNA, and are reproduced countless times.

Theoretically, bacteria can then be manipulated to synthesise the proteins that the transplanted genes were previously responsible for producing. Thus, there is only one word to describe the promise held out by recombinant DNA research, and that word is 'stupendous'. Vaccines, antibiotics, enzymes, hormones. . . The list of products that could be poured out on an immense and cheap scale by the bacterial factories of tomorrow, is endless!

Unfortunately, human genetic research is still a far cry from that involving bacteria like E. coli (a specis found in the human large intestine, and the commonest used in recombinant DNA research. Bacterial DNA and bacterial genes, particulalry those of E. coli permit easy study and easy manipulation, as compared to the much



Unfertilised ovum in the folds of the Fallopian tubes.

more complicated human DNA and genes. But perhaps one day scientists *will* be manipulating human DNA and genes—and, given the potential of the Steptoe-Edwards in vitro fertilisation process, scientists might even be able to play God with test-tube human embryoes; snipping out 'wrong' or 'unwanted' genes, splicing on the 'right' genes. . . a truly enthralling prospect indeed!

(On the other hand, we could have a situation like the one Art Buchwald faced while on an imaginary visit to a future 'gene lab' that churns out people: on asking one of the lab-workers 'if there have been any accidents', he is told. 'yes—someone accidentally mixed up the genes of Jack the Ripper and a donkey'. What could possibly be the result? 'We reproduced Idi Amin')

We began this article with the first test-tube baby in human history and then realised that the in vitro fertilisation technique of Steptoe and Edwards was only one facet of the vast, iridiscent spectrum that research in reproductive technology now presents.—cloning and gene juggling being two other enthralling aspects of the same spectrum.

Today, Man's mind, not content with probing the vast emptiness of outer space and the eternal enigmas of the universe, is beginning to grapple with the mystery of Life itself. Will the secrets he learns be of ultimate good to him? Will he use the power they grant him in a sensible way? Or will he abuse this awesome boon—a power that may one day annihilate him? I can

THE DICTATOR'S EAR

GENETIC engineering through cloning may fill the planet with Shakespeares and Newtons but what guarantee is there that some mad scientist will not let loose a horde of Hitlers and the like? Oppressive regimes and their leaders can keep perpetuating themselves and man will always be in shackles if his skin is not already used for making lampshades (you know, my husband has just brought a lampshade made of Antiguan negro skin!)

It was such a Kafkaesque world that the American humorist Woody Allen portrayed in his film *The Sleeper.* Allen by some time machine process wakes up centuries later in a world which smacks of the Big Brother and the Two-Minute Hate Campaign of Orwell's 1984.

It is total dictatorship and the dictator has just died in an attack by underground rebels. What has survived the bomb attack is only the dictator's 'ear' and the regime is on the lookout for brilliant surgeons who can restore the dictator to life by the process of cloning.

Woody Allen sides with the underground and sets out to destroy the dictator's ear, accompanied by his girlfriend. Allen, always the brilliant comedian, is so nervous that he bites off his girlfriend's nails!

Anyway, posing as a surgeon who will do the cloning, he enters the closely guarded chamber where the 'ear' is placed with all the respect reserved normally for a religious relic. And then, he runs away with the 'ear' to the utter consternation of the militia guarding it. When they come threateningly close, Woody Allen points his revolver at the 'ear' he holds in his left hand, saying dramatically: come closer and I will kill your dictator!

Then follows the mock chase when Woody Allen accidentally drops the 'ear' and a road roller goes over it, stretching the prized 'ear' to the shape of a Haryana chapati!

When one saw the film first, one thought it a mere comedy. But now one realises what an ominous message Woody Allen has for us.

–J.S.R.

only quote the British scientist, R.A. Beatty from an article 'The Future of Reproduction' written at the turn of the '70s, when Edwards and Steptoe were first beginning to make the news, and the concept of the 'test-tube' baby was born:

"The use of reproductive technology in man means some degree of change–however small–in our reproductive habits. . .(and) those who oppose (such) change have one very important criticism. They argue, sensibly, that if new forms of control of human reproduction exist, or are likely to be developed, who is to control the controllers? Let us not evade the issue: many discoveries have been, and will continue to be, misused. (Should the cure for malaria have been withheld–because it led to overpopulation? Should the development of penicillin have been stopped–because it kept alive soldiers fighting unjust wars?) Of course it is no answer to call for an end to all research so that there are fewer discoveries to abuse.

"The avoidance of the birth of children with clear-cut abnormalities–negative eugenics–is already fairly acceptable. But scientists and non-scientists alike have a powerful aversion to positive eugenics–the controlled breeding of 'better' children. The argument is threefold. First, wherever it has been attempted on a large scale, it has been in the hands of evil men. Secondly, there is no proper measure of indefinable qualities such as nobility or courage; and if we cannot measure a character, we cannot select for it. Thirdly, even if selection were effective, the results would not necessarily be something to look forward to with pleasure. The controllers of positive eugenics would probably be leaders of religious or political power groups. Desirable human qualities–those tending to perpetuate the power group–would no doubt include submissiveness to the power group and readiness to act rashly on its behalf. Undesirable qualities would probably include gentleness and the questioning of the power group's authority. With relief, one must consider that mankind is simply not ready for positive eugenics." **END**

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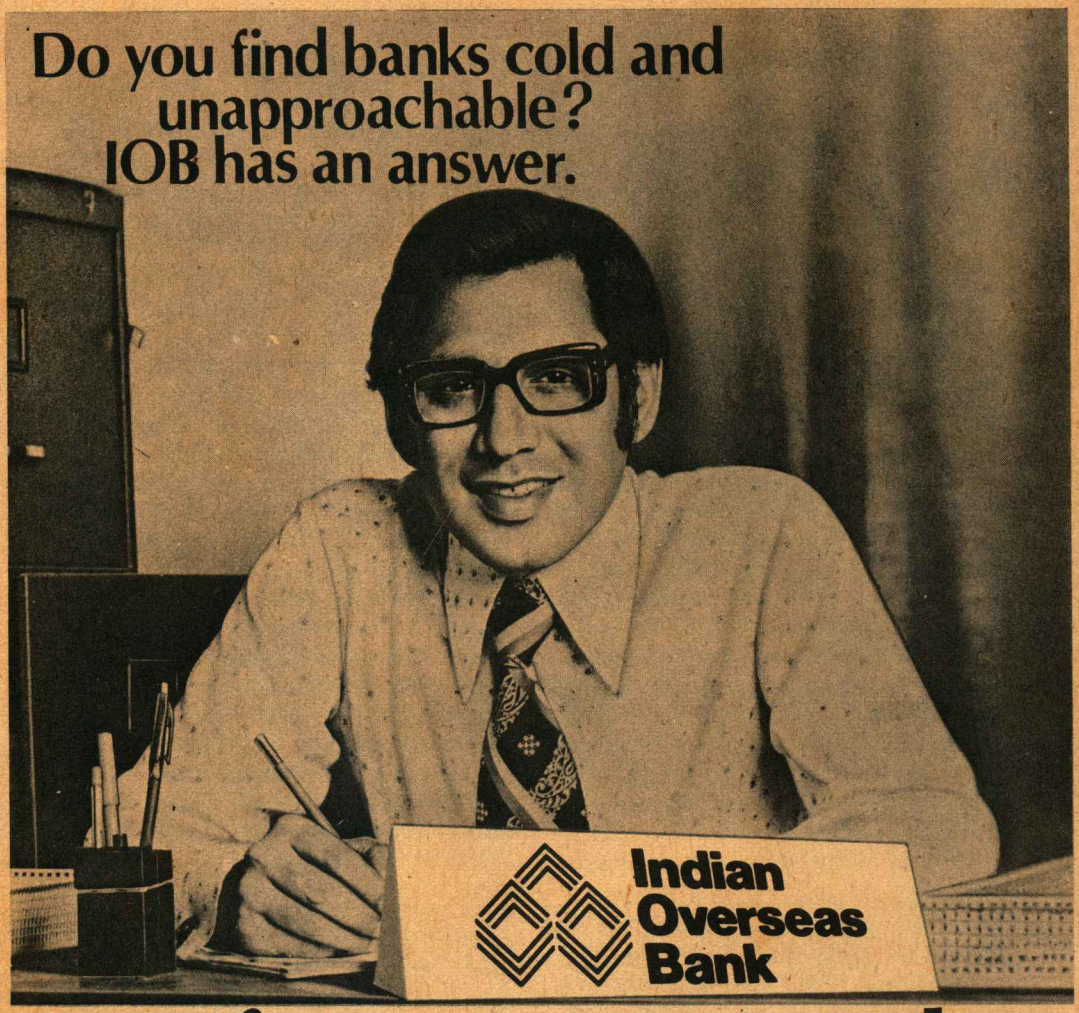

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The budgerow was a kind of an ark that glided over the Ganga without smoke or smell. It did not creak or roll. The passenger could write or paint in comfort and if he was tired, just go ashore and stretch his legs.

SLOWLY UP THE GANGA

By Ruskin Bond

SIR EDMUND Hillary's recent jet-boat expedition up the Ganga was unusual but hardly unique when one recalls that, before the advent of the railways, the Ganga was the principal highway of northern India. There was a time, in the early years of the 19th century, when budgerows, *bholias, patellas,* pinnaces and "vessels of every fabric" plied busily between Calcutta and Allahabad.

For the East India Company's servants the voyage up or down the Ganga in a budgerow (from the Bengali *bajra*) was a delightful experience: one which may no longer be enjoyed, simply because the budgerow is no more. In these days of jet-travel, we have no use for so slow-moving a monster. Everyone is in a hurry, even if the ultimate destination is still uncertain, and we have no time for anyone or anything that moves in a leisurely fashion.

The budgerow was a sort of ark that glided placidly over the surface of the Ganga without emitting smoke, smell, or noise. It did not creak or throb or pitch or roll. The passenger could write or paint on board in comfort.

The budgerow was very broad in the beam, and the whole of the stern or poop provided accommodation for the passenger. There were usually two cabins, or rather rooms, with a verandah in front. These rooms (with bathroom attached) had large windows, without glass but fitted with venetian blinds to keep out rain and sun. The traveller brought his own furniture along, and there was ample space for beds, sofas, writing desks and other luxuries.

THE forepart of the budgerow was decked with two covered hatchways which led to the hold in which the passenger could place most of his luggage. This was stored on rafters to prevent it getting soaked by the water which usually found its way into the vessel. The fore-deck was used by the crew. Here there were seats for the oarsmen, usually sixteen in number. The *golahi* stood in the prow and took soundings. The *manghi* or skipper steered from the upper deck or roof of the cabins. At night, the crew slept on the deck. During the day, travellers sat on it in easy-chairs and enjoyed the ever-changing panorama that unfolded on either side of the river.

The budgerow had a short stout mast, through the top of which a rope could be passed when it became necessary to tow the vessel. Joined to the main mast was a top mast, on which a sail could be hoisted when the wind was favourable.

Douglas Dewar informs us that the *bholia* was a narrow budgerow, much lighter and swifter but far less comfortable; it was used largely by cadets and others who could not afford the expense of the budgerow with its larger crew. There was also the pinnace, which had a keel and was a better sailing-vessel than the budgerow, but was not really suited to the shoal-strewn

upper reaches of the Ganga.

Although the budgerow was a very comfortable vessel, it did have its drawbacks. Progress was very slow. It had to be tied to the bank at night, and when in motion its speed rarely exceeded five miles an hour. The Company used to allow its servants three months joining time when transferred from Fort William (Calcutta) to Allahabad. As no official, since time immemorial, has ever been in a hurry to get from one place of work to another, there were no complaints about the slowness of the transport.

OARS were used only when it was necessary to cross from one side of the river to the other. When the wind was unfavourable, the vessel was towed upstream. The tow-rope was passed through the mast and carried ashore by the "dandies", as the men of the crew were named. These marched in a leisurely manner along the bank, keeping step; but sometimes they were forced to wade or swim across tributary nullahs.

At some places, like Jhangira, where the river was narrow and the current swift, progress upstream could be made only when the wind blew from the right direction; otherwise the budgerow had to remain tied up until the weather became favourable. Another cause of delay was grounding on hidden shoals, a hazard which even Sir Edmund's jet-boats frequently encountered. The process of disengaging a budgerow was a lengthy one. The absence of a keel caused the vessel to be unmanageable in squally weather, and occasionally budgerows were wrecked, with some loss of life.

While travelling by budgerow was pleasant in the cold weather, it could be disagreeable in May and June. The cabins were so low that *punkahs* could not be suspended from the roofs, and the glare from the water was hard on the eyes. During the monsoon rains the traveller did not have to complain much of the heat, but at night the insects used to be very troublesome.

On the other hand, there was so much to see, and the traveller could go ashore and stretch his legs in the evening after the vessel had been tied up for the night.

CAPTAIN Williamson, the author of the *East India Vade Mecum*, published in 1810, advised travellers to hire budgerows by the journeys and not by the day, because in the latter case it was only natural for the crew to want to take things easy and make the journey last as long as possible.

In addition to the budgerow, the traveller would also have to engage boats for his kitchen, his heavy baggage and his horses, also a light dinghy to enable the cook to bring meals easily on to the budgerow. Even so, it was advisable to keep on board some cooking utensils and food, because it often happened that the cook-boat got left far behind. The cook and baggage boats were of the kind known as *woolachs* and patellas.

The *woolach* had a round bottom and could carry from 1,500 to 3,000 maunds, according to its size. The *patella* was flat-bottomed and could carry anything from 400 to 2,000 maunds. It was a crazy craft, apt to give way in the middle and to be swamped in rough weather. So frequent were accidents to this type of vessel that buoys, fastened to long ropes, were always attached to the Government treasure-chests when these were despatched by river. The buoys made it possible to locate sunken treasure.

Before starting on the voyage, sufficient provisions for the entire journey had to be taken on board. The only things that could be obtained from villages along the river were eggs, chickens, milk and vegetables—sufficient, perhaps, in this day and age, but frugal fare for the early 19th century Englishman with his hearty appetite for meat and drink. The traveller supplied himself with a good stock of groceries, hams, tongues, tamarind-cured fish, saltmeat, flour, beer, wine and brandy.

OLD hands would take a dog along to keep the rats at bay. Every budgerow was infested by rats and black-beetles. The beetles, in particular, were very partial to the pomatum which in those days was freely used on the hair. Many a traveller had his sleep disturbed by black-beetles tickling his neck as they attempted to make a meal off the pomade on his hair.

Only about twenty-five miles a day would be covered in the most favourable circumstances. So the traveller would have to make up his mind to settle down to a long voyage. He provided himself with plenty of books, and, if possible, arranged to travel in company with other budgerows; in which case, travellers used to dine alternately on each other's vessels.

Almost every day some place of interest would be passed, and here the voyager could land, and if he had any friends in the vicinity he

Photograph by Jagdish Agarwal

would probably spend a couple of days with them. Far from being boring, the slow journey was full of variety, and many who served the Company regarded the days passed in the budgerow as some of the most pleasant experienced by them in India.

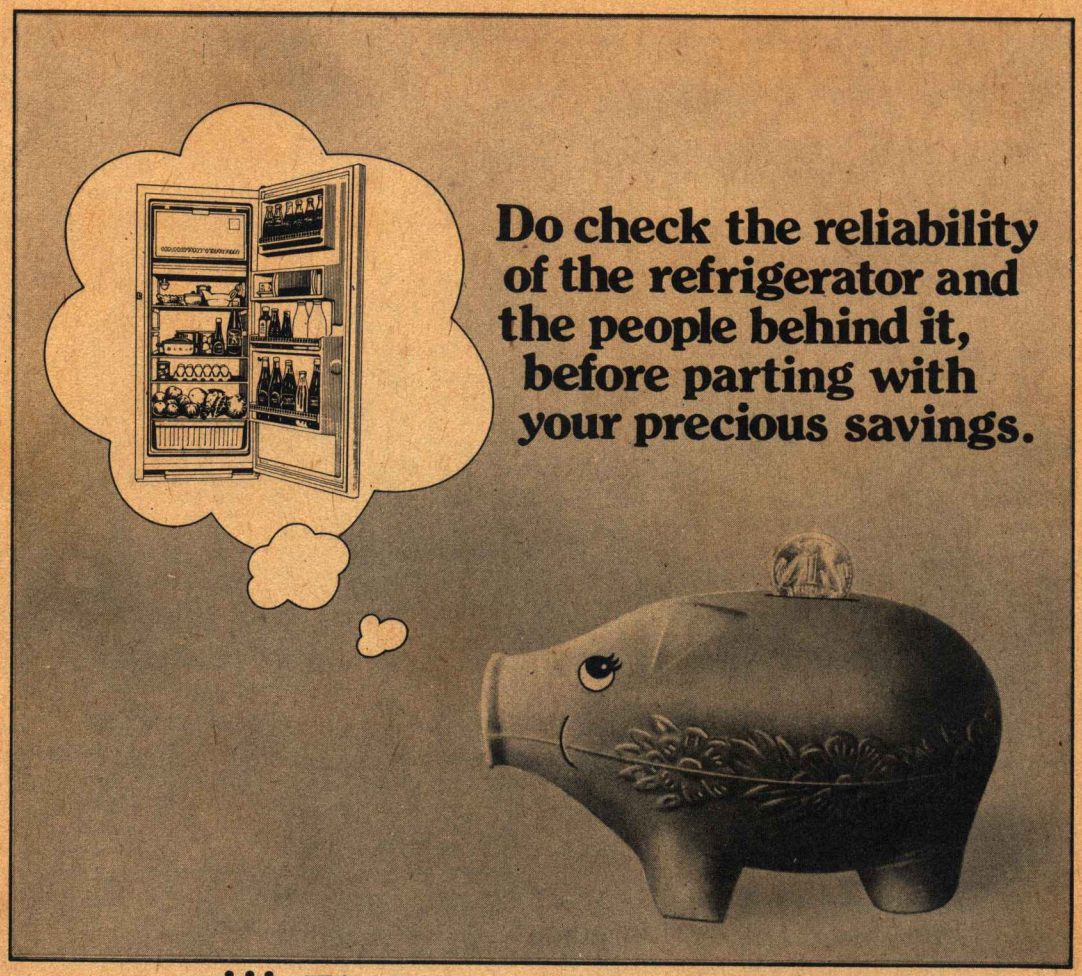
By 1840 steampower had arrived, and regular steamer services linked Calcutta with Kanpur, with a fortnightly service to Agra along the Jumna. Steamers did not stop at Allahabad but went as far as Garmukhteshwar, 400 miles further upstream. Thornton's Gazetteer of 1854 describes Kanpur as "so plied with vessels that it presented an appearance of a port". How different the scene today, with the Ganga devoid of all vessels for hundreds of miles at a stretch, only a few country craft dotting the waters here and there.

The railways killed the inland steamer services, and before that, of course, the steamers had put an end to the budgerows and their leisurely mode of travel.

BUT sometimes the budgerow was still the vessel of choice for those who would cruise gently up and down the Ganga. P.C. Chaudhuri has described a voyage made by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, father of Rabindranath and the founder of Santiniketan. For a hundred rupees, their budgerow took them past Monghyr, Patna and Banaras. Later, they took another budgerow along the Jumna from Agra to Delhi arriving by the walled city of Delhi on January 9, 1857. On the sands they saw the aged Bahadur Shah with his Court. They were flying kites.

On the return trip the following year, they took passage for Calcutta on a cargo steamer at Allahabad, where they again saw the ex-King of Delhi by the river, about to leave for his exile in Burma. The King's departure from the country was also symbolic of the passing of an age. The pace of life was quickening, and already, in 1855, the East Indian Railway had been opened between Calcutta and Raniganj, a distance of 122 miles. In another thirty years the country would be a network of railway-lines.

Only the river itself would be the same—boisterous in its youth as it leapt out from its snow-bed in the Himalayas; laborious in manhood, as it rolled onwards for thousands of miles, distributing its waters for the cultivation of the soil; and sad in its old age, when it could no longer hold together and sent divergent waters on separate courses towards the sea. Earth to earth: the waters settle and silt, and the Ganga yields up in its old age the accumulations of its youth and manhood. **THE END**



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Inside Woody Allen

MANY PEOPLE THINK I WAS AN OVERNIGHT SUCCESS AS A COMEDIAN...
Spinoza
...BUT THAT'S NOT TRUE.
Spinoza
"BEING AN ENTERTAINER IS NOT AS EASY AS IT LOOKS. I RECALL THE EARLY DAYS WHEN I WAS UNKNOWN..."
YOUR MATERIAL IS FUNNY, KID, BUT YOU HAVEN'T GOT THE RIGHT LOOK FOR TV OR FILMS...
Jokes by W. Allen
GEE, I HAD MY HEART SET ON A CAREER IN SHOW BUSINESS
WAIT, MAYBE ON RADIO...
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RADIO? BUT THERE ARE NO COMEDIANS ON THE RADIO ANYMORE!
YES, IT'S PERFECT...
ON RADIO, NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE HOW-ER-UM-NON-TALL YOU ARE.
O.K., MISTER ROLLINS, I'LL TRY IT.
Joe Martin
"...AND NOW, PLEASE WELCOME WOODY ALLEN!!!"
("...HERE, LET ME LOWER THIS MICROPHONE FOR YOU, WOODY...")
5-8

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When you hear classical music, do not get involved in the text of the khayal. Lend your ear to the emerging melodic form and you reach the essence of music. Our foremost singers have been notorious pronouncers, but their music has swayed all. In Indian classical music, the linguistic minimum is the aesthetic absolute.

SA RE GA MA PA OF HINDUSTANI MUSIC

By Surinder Singh

IT WAS DURING the interval of a Ravi Shanker recital at the Sapru House, New Delhi. An ecstatic young thing was telling another, "Wasn't it wonderful! Though why did he take so long warming up, I can't understand." "Yes," said the other, "The fun started only after the Tabla player came on the scene."

With the passage of time and more specially with the growing acceptance of Indian classical music in the West, Pandit Ravi Shanker is the 'in thing' even in India. But God knows only a miniscule minority has any idea as to what our Shastriya sangit is all about.

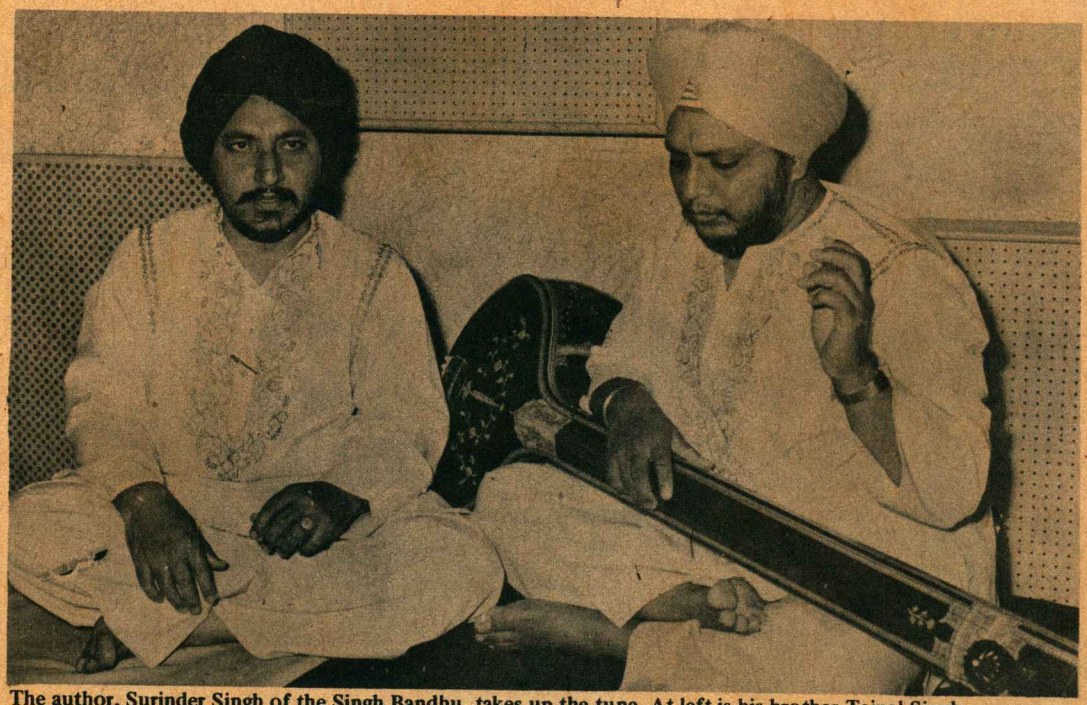
Yes, the most important thing about Indian classical music is that it is Shastriya or according to clearly set out rules. Music in India is not merely the unbridled expression of emotions; the expression has to be according to certain melodic principles made sacrosanct by recorded treatises and given a measure of flexibility by performing masters over the ages.

Broadly speaking, Indian music has never broken itself loose from its religious moorings. Music everywhere has sprung from the Church but elsewhere the musician has gone ahead and snapped the umblical chord that bound it to the icon and the pulpit. In India, the musician even today talks of his vocation as a 'sadhana' and a means to achieving 'moksha' or salvation.

Not that our music has refused to recognise emotions other than the sublime. But for the worldly thoughts, it has thrown up different forms like the thumri, ghazal and dadra while its gharanedars or traditional singers have resolutely stuck to lofty idealism associated with their classical music.

From times immemorial, the musicologist has accepted the existence of two kinds of music: The Margi Sangit or the music for the Path of Salvation and the Deshi Sangit or the Music of the Masses. The salvation-path music was supposed to be unchangeable while the other kind could change according to times. Interestingly, however, it has been the change in the Margi Sangit that has given Indian music its aura of mysticism and out-of-this-world charm. If the vedic thought went through the crucible of the Upanishadic enquiry and results, the Sufi and Bhakti movements, how could its musical offspring remain unchanged?

The vedic music was simple, direct and evocative as only chant music can be. Then musicianship started to assert itself. The earlier history is not very clear but Sharangdev, the 12th, 13th Century musicologist, mentions Prabandh Vastu and Rupak as current forms. The musical scale had also fully evolved by that time and the raga system had fully asserted itself. It is interesting to note that Dhrupad and Dhamar, these days referred to as 'time honoured styles', came later. In fact, Dhrupad is said to be an evolution of Dhruvapad of the same times and it literally means the constant song. Dhrupad held unchallenged sway for two hun-



The author, Surinder Singh of the Singh Bandhu, takes up the tune. At left is his brother Tejpal Singh.

dred years or more than the Khayal style started making its hesitant entry somewhere in the fifteenth century. It may be interesting to note that the celebrated musician Tansen was a Dhrupad singer.

Since both the Dhrupad and Khayal styles are in vogue today, it will be easier to understand the basic urges of our music; its peculiar concept of beauty and its relationship to the philosophical thought of India, if we broadly grasp their forms.

Both Dhrupad and Khayal styles of singing have two clearly definable compartments—slow and fast singing. It is important to state that in Indian musical tradition, instrumental music is supposed to follow the vocal format so what is said of vocal music generally holds good for instrumental music as well.

In Dhrupad style, the artiste first sings the alaap with the help of 'nom tom', words that mean nothing. The alaap is supposed to unfold the raga in all its stages and the compositional singing with the rhythmic accompaniment comes afterwards and is less important than the alaap. An average instrumental music recital follows the same pattern and hence the talk of 'warming up' is absurd. In our music, the slower exposition is considered to be more important, the 'words' have only a secondary place.

The khayal singer, because he found his audience not quite able to digest the full dose of abstract music, resorted to the use of the words and rhythmic accompaniment right from the beginning. Thus evolved the practice of the slow and the fast khayal.

It is important to note here that even though the khayal singer made an important formal change in the Dhrupad style, he did this more as a tactic at audience-enticing than as a fundamental change in the essentials of music. I have asked great musicians like Pandit Krishnarao Shanker and Ustad Amir Khan and they have confirmed that once the composition is rendered the main occupation of the musician is to unfold the raga. Words merely help.

Music and worship

UNCONSCIOUSLY, it would seem, our musicians seem to have followed the Indian attitude towards idol worship. The idol is not god but it is a good means of concentrating one's vagrant mind on god. It must lead to the comprehension of the Undefinable, Limitless Lord. Similarly the text of a khayal might give a starting point to a musician; a kind of convenient peg to hang his musical ideas upon. It might also give a sort of tangible emotion to

the listener to grasp at the start of the recital. But the musician always seeks to unfold the raga. The labyrinth of language is a snare deliberately set to be broken later to move into the realm of pure melody, unsullied by words. For in music, the melody strives to exist by itself and needs no linguistic prop.

Thus when you hear classical music, do not get involved in the text of the khayal being sung. Lend your ear to the emerging melodic form and you would have reached the essence of music. Many of our foremost singers have been notorious mispronouncers of the words and yet their music has swayed generations of music lovers.

In fact, it would be wiser to go a step forward in this direction and to examine the lighter forms of music as well. In semi-classical forms like thumri and dadra, the word becomes important and the musician attempts to give it musical interpretation. The process is technically called 'bol banana'. In ghazal singing the musical content yields further place to the poetry while in popular music the word is supreme. Music must become its vehicle. Thus in terms of the aesthetics of music the dominance of language in the song is a downhill journey. Or in the words of Dr. Saxena, the well-known thinker and writer, in Indian classical music the linguistic minimum is the aesthetic absolute.

We have talked of the raga in Indian music. Now what exactly is a raga? A rough definition of a raga is that it is an arrangement of musical notes in which certain notes are emphasised and certain others completely ignored in the ascending or the descending order. However, the raga is an integral entity. It has a personality and a basic emotional character of its own. And since it is an integral and not single dimensional entity, a raga lends itself to a myriad of emotional interpretations depending upon the capability, attitude or the mood of the musician. It is no wonder, therefore, that a raga can be utilised both for achieving the highest musical samadhi and for creating a flippant film song.

State of samadhi

THE basic urge of Indian classical music is the achievement of a state of trance or samadhi. This is achieved by the slow, contemplative alaap portion.

Consider for a while an average Indian classical music recital. The alaap portion—be it an instrument, a dhrupad alaap or a slow khayal—follows this pattern. The musician proceeds at a deliberate, leisurely pace. He does not use all the notes of the raga in one go. On the contrary, he takes up first the lower octave and then very gradually goes on notes from higher octaves, discarding lower notes as he proceeds. This process of gradual use of the scale is known as 'barhat' which literally means carrying forward.

This scheme leads to a cyclic unfoldment of the raga. The musician emphasises each note but also continues to expand his reference. Thus, while the melody proceeds linearly, the music goes on in advances, ripples of note combinations. In every raga, there is one pivotal note called the vadi swara. The melody must emphasise it.

Among the many graces used in our music, the meend or the glide is the most important. It is this meend that lends to our music its characteristic dreamy charm. This technique also reminds one of the gliding figures of Konarak and Ajanta. On the other hand, the ripple-like cyclic movements are obviously the melodic use of the yogic techniques of contemplating through mandalas and chakras.

It is basically this meandering movement that induces a hypnotic state or the state of a trance in Indian classical music. Whether it uses words as in the khayal style or it just uses a few meaningless syllables, the raga unfoldment gradually lifts you into another plane of experience where nothing but the melody remains.

But our music does not end with this state of trance. It continues to find its finale in another gradual burst of speed building up to a crescendo. While our ancient music must have faster singing as well but the tana singing of the khayal style followed by most of the popular instruments is the result of Muslim influence on our music. It is notable that ancient instruments like the Been and Surbahar do not make use of super fast speeds and dhrupad style of singing also uses very fast tempo but rarely. What is the aesthetic significance of the super fast speed?

For an answer to this question one must look to the Sufi concept of divine ecstacy or 'Haal' as it is sometimes called. The Sufis believe that unlike the still posture of the Indian saints, the state of religious ecstacy induced frenzied activity before all became still. The drut sing-

ing of the khayal style is but the musical representation of this concept.

In our musical tradition the divinity of a musical note has always been accepted. Naad is Brahma. The ancient texts refer to a single note a swara meaning 'swayamev ranjyate' or one that is beautiful by itself. It is clear that only divinity can exist as beauty independent of everything else—time, space or any other reference. This also explains the Indian musicians' practice of emphasising each and every note and the concept of 'Swara Sadhana'.

From the foregoing, therefore, these conclusions emerge. Indian classical music is not dependent upon language for its exposition. The slow movement is more important since it leads to contemplation. The raga system is the musical manifestation of the ancient Indian metaphysical thought and the drut singing of the khayal style is the beautiful result of the Sufi impact on our religious attitudes.

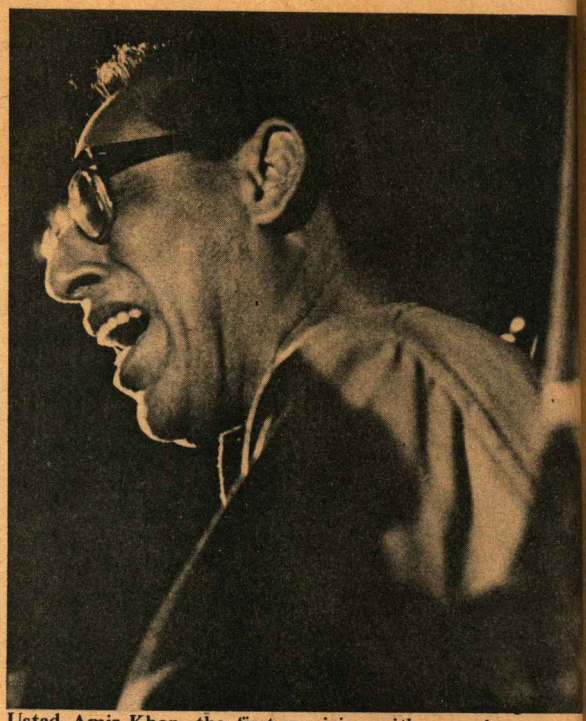
Though Indian classical music is generally divided into the Carnatic and the Hindusthani branches, there is no denying the fact that, in their essence, both the musical systems are the same. The writer does not claim expert knowledge of the Carnatic music but he has heard enough South Indian musicians to say with confidence that with some variations, the two systems have retained their basic unity remarkably.

Having noted the salient features of our music, it will be profitable to acquaint ourselves with some of our great musicians. Such an exercise should make our understanding of our music clearer.

The most important factor in the evolution of the practice of music in recent times has been the evolution of the gharanas. Since the British did not quite care for Indian music, the musicians attached themselves to the native Princes and their courts and their music came to be labelled as the music of the gharana of the patron-prince. Of the gharanas, the Gwalior gharana is the most ancient but its leading lights are either no more or like Pandit Krishnarao Shanker Pandit long past the prime of the performing career.

The two masters

NEARER our times, two great musicians who influenced the bulk of present performances were Ustads Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and Amir Khan.



Ustad Amir Khan, the first musician with a modern sensitivity. In music, he was the master of the understatement. (*Avinash Pasricha*)

Ghulam Ali, who had his training from his uncle Kale Khan, was an exponent of the Patiala style of singing. The Patiala gharana was started by Ustads Ali Bux and Fateh Ali Khan of whom the latter was from a family of dhrupad singers. Ghulam Ali also went for dhrupad training to Ustad Nasiruddin Khan Dagar. Ghulam Ali's khayal singing was formally correct but his austerity often bordered on the rigid and it was only in his faster singing that he really came into his own. A warm hearted, fun loving person, he was moved by the forms of objects—be it a beautiful maiden or the thundering cloud.

His khayal compositions (especially the faster ones) reveal a Keats-like love for drawing melodic picture. His Kedara cheeza 'Naveli naar'; the Desi piece, 'Manua larze', Kamod composition 'Chhaand de mora achra' should be heard if one has to enjoy the musical descriptions of thoughts and scenes. His fast singing is joyously fluent.

Since he was a master of melodic picturisation, Ghulam Ali Khan shone specially as a thumri singer. In that branch of singing he was

without a peer and none of the living musicians can come anywhere near him. His two LPs, one a collection of thumris and the other a collection of his three minute discs of khayal should be heard by anyone trying to learn to appreciate classical and semi-classical music.

Ustad Amir Khan was the exact antithesis of Ghulam Ali Khan Saheb. A taciturn man, Amir Khan set his musical store by the contemplative and the dignified. In music, he was a master of understatement.

Amir Khan had a rich and sonorous bass voice mellowed by long practice. He excelled in ragas known for their depth of feelings. Thus he was famous for his Darbari Kanhra and Mia Malhar, Asavari and Lalit; Malkauns and Marwa. In many ways, he was the first musician with a modern sensitivity. In our gharana-proud tradition, no outside influences were admitted and any trace of such influences was roundly condemned in private and stoutly denied in public. But Amir Khan openly admitted his debt to Ustad Aman Ali Khan and Abdul Waheed Khan; Rajab Ali Khan and Bande Ali Khan. With Amir Khan the style ceased to be an imposition of the gharana and rightly became the sum total of musical influences and the peculiar genius of the musician.

Since the Khan was acutely conscious of the religious moorings of our music, his singing had an aura of mystic experience about it. His stance on the performing platform was almost yogic—crosslegged, calm with eyes closed most of the time. One has to hear his raga Marwa to feel the poignancy of Amir Khan's style; his Lalit and Malkauns to know its religious fervour; his Hansadhwani to revel in its vitality.

It is indeed unfortunate that no more than three Long Play recordings of Ustad Amir Khan were released during his life time. He did not sing during the 77 rpm disc days for he thought that three minutes was too brief a span to project his kind of music. When the Long Play came, the foreign owned gramophone company was too busy making money on songs recorded by others for films. A handful of musical die-hards like G.N. Joshi in Bombay and Jnan Ghosh in Calcutta had the perseverance to bring great musicians to the recording studios. Even Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan was recorded for an LP

When you hear Bhimsen Joshi, you are moved whether you know the musical intricacies or not. *(Avinash Pasricha)*

Kishori Amonkar, daughter of Mogubai Kurdikar, believes in questioning the rigours of every style. The sheer force of her emotional intensity will sweep you off your feet.

when he was well past his prime.

However, there are enough recordings of the Ustad with the AIR and some of them are now being pressed by gramophone companies. Those who wish to get acquainted with the devotional tradition of classical music will do well to listen to a lot of Amir Khan.

Both Amir Khan and Ghulam Ali Khan are also important for music lovers as almost all the musicians performing today have been influenced by one or the other.

Pandit Bhimsen Joshi must head the list of the leading khayal singers on the contemporary musical scene.

An exponent of the Kirana style of music, Bhimsen had his training under the great Sawai Gandharva, who also gave us such musicians as Gangubai Hangal and Pheroze Dastoor. Though Joshi admits of the unmistakable influence of Ustad Amir Khan on his singing, he has preserved the characteristic stamp of the Kirana gharana in his singing. The Kirana gharana is known for its sweet voiced tunefulness and a detailed, loving manner of raga delineation.

Pandit Bhimsen Joshi has a rather rugged voice basically. But due to his training and personal inclination, he infuses it with deep passion and modulates it with characteristic Kirana tenderness. So that when you hear Bhimsen, you are moved whether you know the musical intricacies or not.

Although Kirana gharana is not particularly known for its faster singing–in fact the celebrated Ustad Abdul Karim Khan was apparently deficient in his tana singing–a Joshi recital concludes invariably with a masterly display of the crescendo. Here Joshi follows both Sawai Gandharva and Amir Khan who were equally proficient both in vilambit (slow) and drut (fast) singing.

Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, the guru of Sawai Gandharva, had evolved a unique style of thumri singing in which emotional rendering often bordered on the sentimental. Pandit Bhimsen Joshi is a faithful follower of that style. As his own special contribution, he has created a unique style of Bhajan singing where the Maharashtrian Abhang style, the Poorabi thumri style and his own brand of khayal singing blend to present a moving, vigorous song. The best example of this is his famous composition, 'Jo bhaje Hari Ko sada'. It is impossible to attend a Bhimsen Joshi concert where the audiences do not insist on his singing this particular bhajan. In fact, no other classical music composition has won such popular acclaim

after Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's 'Yaad Piya Ki Aaye'.

Jaipur gharana

JAIPUR gharana is another important school of music that is still flourishing. Its founder was Ustad Alladiya Khan and it gave us a great musician like Kesarbai Kerkar who matched her musical talents with such a crowd pleasing maestro as Ustad Fayyaz Khan. Though she never attained the popularity of Kesarbai Kerkar, Mogubai Kurdikar is another revered name amongst the exponents of that gharana.

Kishori Amonkar is the daughter of Mogubai Kurdikar. She has had the benefit of the erudite training of her mother. But Kishori is an individualist—both in her life and art. She has looked beyond the frontiers of her gharana; imbibed influences and received training, among others, from the late Pandit Husan Lal, a film music composer and an outstanding exponent of the Punjab style of singing.

So powerful is Kishori's personal musical vision that in her signing it is not possible to discern the influences in their original shape. The rather austere formal discipline of Jaipur gharana seems to have wilted under her rebellious instinct. Kishori Amonkar believes in questioning everything under the sun; the rigors of the style, nay, the very basis of the form. It is thus that she seems to play merry hell with the accepted forms of the ragas. But Kishori has long veered away from the path of a fanatic iconoclast. Those who have the privilege of knowing her intimately are aware of the change.

A complete emotional involvement in whatever she sings is the greatest asset of Kishori Amonkar's singing. Add to this an impeccable tunefulness and a remarkably pliant voice and you have a fairly good idea of Kishori's music. In a characteristic Kishori recital you might miss the Kiranian detail but the sheer force of emotional intensity will sweep you off your feet. And that is true of all branches of her singing—pure classical, light classical or light.

Pandit Mallikarjun Mansur, unlike Kishori Amonkar, is a faithful exponent of the Jaipur style. In his singing one can listen to emotion tempered with classical discipline. His raga depiction is clearly defined and the formal structure of his rhythmo-melodic performances a delight for the classicist. You do not look for the profundity of an Amir Khan or the lyricism of a Ghulam Ali in a Mansurian concert—he doesn't aim to give it to you. Just sit back and watch him weave those intriguing musical patterns on the solid background of rhythm. Once again do not try to follow the erudition in his music. Lot of harm has been done to our music by the talk of 'vidya' or the knowledge of music. It exists but mainly for the musician. A listener needs only to lend a willing ear to the proceedings for a full enjoyment of any good recital.

The Agra gharana, like the Gwalior gharana, saw its zenith at least forty years ago when the late Ustad Fayyaz Khan Saheb ruled the roast in the world of Indian classical music. As one who has never heard the Ustad when he was at his performing peak, this writer does not wish to attempt any critical appreciation of his art. However, two vocalists, Sharafat Hussain Khan and Latafat Hussain Khan, are the representative singers of this gharana and their music can be heard for its forthright manner, rhythmic intricacy and an overall earthy quality of emotive content.

I have deliberately left out Kumar Gandharva because he deserves a separate mention. To the classical puritan, Kumar is an enigma. He avowedly takes our music back to its folk roots. Considering the fact that the classical ragas evolved out of folk tunes, going back to folk music can be termed as an attempt to putting back the clock. But it is a tribute to the genius of Kumar Gandharva that he has not only got his approach accepted by the bulk of classical music lovers, but he has also won unqualified praise from many a musicologist and connoisseur. This fact alone is proof enough of the fundamental resilience of the raga system—that it has been able to absorb the near revolutionary attitude of Kumar.

Having talked about the folksy air of Kumar's singing, one has not said everything about his music. Kumar is a thinker and an innovator. His creative urge drives and permeates all his musical efforts. Tuberculosis deprived him of one lung and thus sustaining of a note is not possible in his singing. But he has more than made up for the loss by evolving a new idiom in which brief but poignant alaaps are followed by spring-like tanas that flit around like the goldfish in the pond. The joy of a Kumar Gandharva recital is in the rhythmic tension created and since his musical face is

turned folkward, in the imaginative melodic picture of the text of the khayal.

Instrumentalists

IN THE sphere of instrumental music the leading names are Pandit Ravi Shanker and Ustad Vilayat Khan in sitar; Ustad Ali Akbar Khan in sarod; Bismillah Khansaheb in shehnai and Ustad Allah Rakha Khan in tabla. The most outstanding players of Been, the most ancient Indian instruments, are Ustad Zia Mohiuddin Dagar and Asad Ali Khan.

Pandit Ravi Shanker must come first for he has come to symbolise Indian music the world over and has spearheaded the revival of music in India. Ravi came to the world of music via dance. He met his mentor, Ustad Alauddin Khan, in brother Shanker's troupe. Young Ravi's love for music kindled by the Guru. he left the dance company and went to stay with Alauddin Khan or Baba as he was affectionately called by his disciples and admirers.

In his music, Ravi Shanker follows strictly the format of the dhrupad singers and Been players. The alaap is exhaustive and meditative and the 'works' start only in the gat portion. From the point of form alone a good Ravi Shanker recital can serve as a model. His interpretation of ragas has the stamp of authenticity. Attending a Ravi Shanker concert mark his meticulous care for detail; the grandeur of his slow playing and the robust texture of his fast music. Ravi is an acknowledged master of rhythm with which he can toy at will.

To Ravi Shanker also goes the credit of bringing the essentials of show business on the classical music platform. Since he had a long experience of appearing on the professionally managed stages of Europe with his brother's troupe, Ravi knew the importance of the entry and exit on a stage. In his concerts every detail is carefully worked out. The jossamer sticks burning at both ends, the lights, the placing of the mikes and the exact timing of the entry of the main performer and his accompanists. Thus apart from his tremendous contribution to the art of music, Pandit Ravi Shanker has also taught the craft of stage management to people.

Ustad Vilayat Khan, unlike Pandit Ravi Shanker, hails from a traditional family of musicians. The family boasts of an unbroken chain of six generations of instrumentalist and many believe that in the matter of handling of the instrument, Vilayat has no equals. Although the Ustad also follows the Been style of playing, his music is more extrovert. Vilayat loves sitar and the instrument also responds to his touch to pour forth notes of golden hue and juicy musicality. It can be argued that at times this skill at instrument handling becomes the be-all and end-all of Vilayat's performance, but one thing is undoubted. At his very best, Vilayat Khan is just divine.

When you hear Vilayat Khan's sitar, you cannot but be enchanted at his dulcet tones; his winsome smile and his fantastic range both in the slower and fast portions. The influence of Amir Khan is pronounced on the playing of both Vilayat and Ravi, but the versatile Vilayat can also bring to you the light classical virtuosity of Ghulam Ali Khan.

Nikhil Banerji is yet another reckonable name in sitar playing. Somehow, the aura of Ustadi attained by Ravi and Vilayat has eluded Nikhilbabu, there is no dearth of knowledgeable musicians who sincerely believe he is better than both his celebrated contemporaries. Surely his unpretentious music with its subdued virtuosity reminds one of Amir Khan.

Had it been not for his flashy, extrovert

Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, a synonym for the sarod.

The Shehnai, like the nightingale, has no cause to be profound, but in Ustad Bismillah Khan's hand, it becomes an enchanted instrument. (*Avinash Pasricha*)

nature. Ustad Abdul Halim Jafar Khan would certainly have etched his name among the all-time great sitarists of the country. But his tremendous musical skill notwithstanding, the Ustad often yields to the winning of the applause of the credulous. Even so, if you love fun and frolic, you will find it in abundant measure in Abdul Halim and he has an apt name for it M'Mazamiri Chhedchhad'.

Spiritual experience

OVER the years, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan has because a synonym for sarod both in India and abroad. The son of Ustad Alauddin Khan (Baba), Ali Akbar has lived a rather unconventional life but upheld the conventional values of our ancient music with complete success. Playing the sarod seems to be a spiritual experience for Ali Akbar and if you are lucky enough to hear even a good recital from him, you will have gone through an experience of a life time. But of late his music has shown signs of deteriorating, perhaps because of his age.

Amjad Ali Khan and Zarin Daroowala are two other notable sarod players.

To the late Pandit Pannalal Ghosh goes the credit of bringing flute on the serious classical music stage. Prior to his arrival, it was considered fit only for pastoral melodies. Pannababu created a new and bigger bamboo flute that produced deep, sonorous sound. This he used to great advantage. Devendra Murdeshwar, his disciple, is continuing the tradition, though Hariprasad Chaurasia is the most popular flute player today.

Hari also plays the bass flute. He has learnt from Annpoorna Devi, the daughter of Ustad Alauddin Khan and his music today is a treat to the lay and the discerning listener alike. It is Hari's impeccable tune and the hypnotic sound production that strike the lay listener. But Hari seldom loses sight of the melodic grammar and that gives his music all the depth. Other notable flautists are Vijaya Raghav Rao and Raghunath Seth.

Ustad Bismillah Khan brought his traditional lute—the shehnai—from the marriage mandap to the musical halls. Bismillah's playing is not marked by any erudition as far as the raga playing technique is concerned. But he is a master at tone control. The shehnai in his hands has become a complete instrument. In the music one can enjoy the strains of pure music but it would be futile to look for profoundness of expression—the nightingale has no cause to be profound.

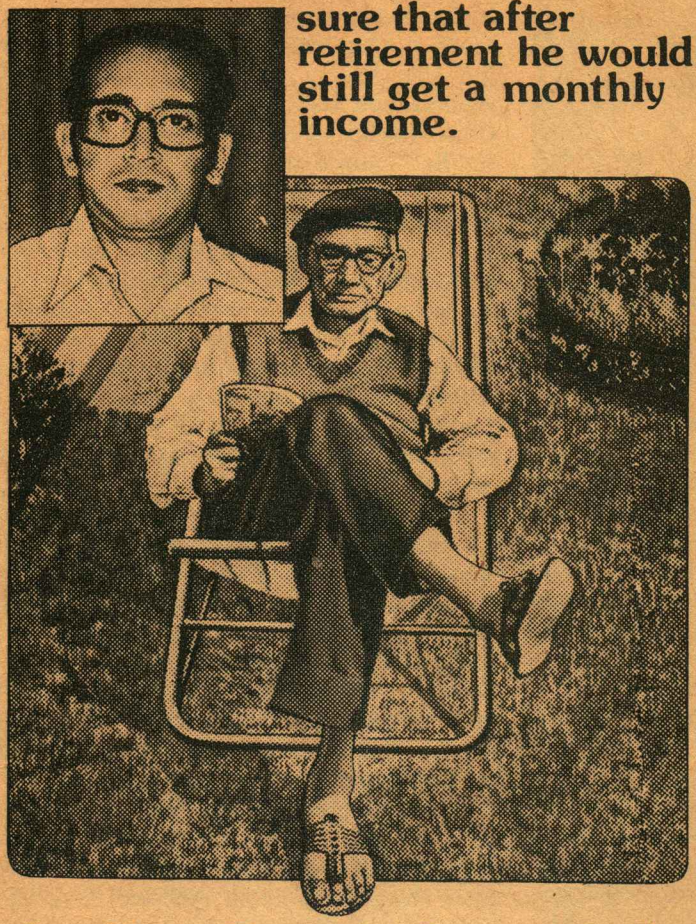
Although young in years, Shiv Kumar Sharma has already assured a place for himself in the annals of Indian instrumental music. Shiv plays the santoor, a Kashmiri instrument used in its original habitat solely as an accompaniment to folk music. It is a harp-like instrument and is played by strumming its strings with the help of two delicate metallic sticks. By its very nature, the instrument cannot execute many of the graces essential to Indian classical music.

Shiv, however, manages his instrument so well that you do not miss anything—gamaks, murkis, meends et al. Not that Shiv is simply a great manipulator of an otherwise impossible instrument. He is a very sound musician and is excellent alike in melody and rhythm. His raga technique is flawless and long training as a tabla player has given to him a natural feel for rhythm which he uses with ease and artistry.

The above list of vocalists and instrumentalists is not exhaustive. The chief criterion for selection of the names has been the possibility of an average listener attending one of their programmes and thus helping him to understand and enjoy Indian classical music better.

Another point that emerges is that among the top ranking musicians, we have men and women of diverse talent and artistic attitudes. It must go to the credit to the immense possibilities of our tradition of music that it allows each one of them the fullest chance of expressing his peculiar and particular brand of music. What further proof does one require for the vitality of a system? **THE END**

Mr. Mehta wanted to make sure that after retirement he would still get a monthly income.



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No hobby can be more satisfying than keeping fishes of your own, no sight can be more fascinating than fishes gliding about in the glass tank. If you thought the process of keeping fish was a bore, here is the article to convert you. This way, you will not only keep fish, but keep them from dying.

GIVE YOURSELF A FISHPOND

By Shabbir Rupawalla

HAVE YOU EVER been inspired to keep fish? In all probability yes. You have looked longingly at fish swimming about in the tank at your friend's or while you waited for an appointment and wished that you too could have them in your surroundings.

Perhaps you captured a few from the local pond and placed them in a bottle and fed them the odd snack, only to find them dead next morning at the bottom of the bottle. What you did not realise was you were killing them with kindness.

In the west, having your own aquarium is one of the biggest hobbies now. Few of us realise the advantages that fish keeping has over other hobbies. What we lack is not enthusiasm, but knowledge. Ignorance has turned many an enthusiast away from fish keeping.

Tropical aquarium fishes are clean, do not smell and can be looked after even when you are away on holiday. And there are few hobbies that are as fascinating as this. For many, it is more than a hobby, a passion.

The following article will help initiate you into keeping fishes, without taking a heavy toll of them.

The aquarium

THE OXFORD Dictionary describes an aquarium as 'an artificial pool or tank for the keeping of live aquatic plants and animals. A place of public entertainment containing tanks'. A fish tank at home too is no less an aquarium.

The most common types of aquaria consist of five glasses bound together by stainless steel and aluminium angles. Some of the standard sizes are: 12x9x6 inches, 18x12x9, 18x10x10 or 24x12x12, 24x15x12, 36x15x12.

The bigger the tank, the happier your fishes will be. Buy the biggest tank you can afford. The dealer is often a good guide in these matters.

There are certain points to be considered before you buy a fish tank: the weight and size of the aquarium. Water is heavy and a gallon of it weighs 10 pounds. To know the gallon capacity, the following formula will help: aquarium capacity = length (in feet) x width x height x 61/2. The base on which the aquarium is to be placed should be strong enough to bear the weight of water. Before placing the tank on the furniture, place a 1/8" cardboard of the same size below it. The stand should be perfectly parallel to the ground.

Lighting

Light is necessary for fishes to stay healthy and for plants to grow. The tank can be lighted by fitting a reflector on top with either fluorescent tube or incandescent bulbs. For the tube, the tank should atleast be 30 inches in length because the smallest tube available in the market is of 24". If the aquarium is less than 30", bulbs will have to be used. Tubes are better, for they consume less power and give an even lighting. The best lighting is of course natural lighting, but this is not controllable and in the evenings artificial lighting is unavoidable.

The amount of lighting can be controlled by 'wattage' which can be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{length of tank in inches} \times 32}{\text{number of hours the tank is lit}}$$

is equivalent to required wattage.

If fluorescent light is used, the wattage needed is only a quarter of the above. The aquarist will have to watch the algae growth on the glass. If the algae is green, it means that the light is more than needed or if it is brown, the light is not enough. Too fast a growth suggests that the light should be toned down.

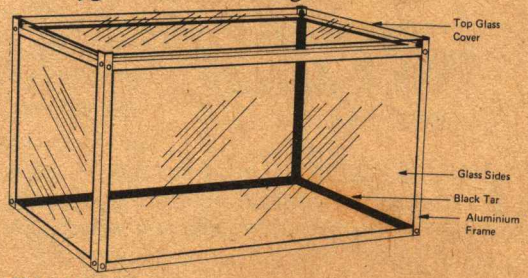
A majority of aquarium fishes do not like harsh lights, so don't forget to place some shade giving rocks and plants in the corners. Fishes are not capable of controlling the light that enters their eyes, so do not switch on aquarium lights in the darkness and jar their eyes. Switch on the lights some distance away, then the room lights, and then the tank's lights.

Aquarium furniture

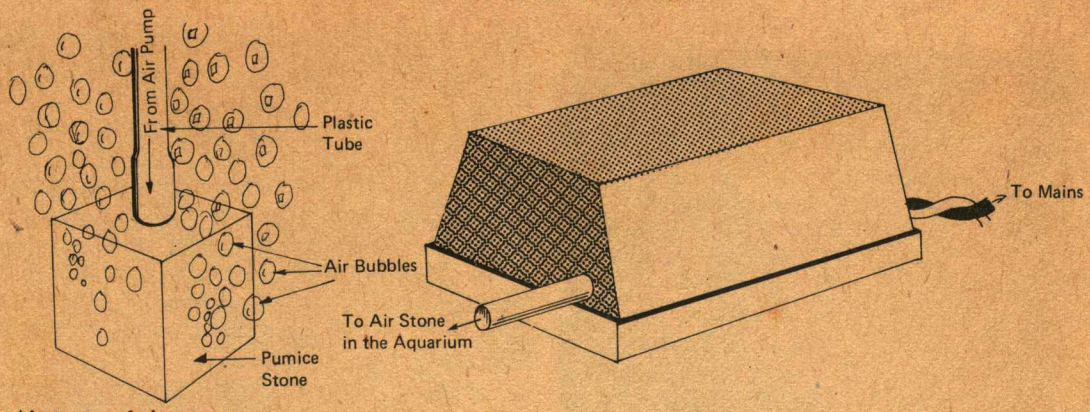
Like all living creatures, fish breathe in oxygen and give out carbon dioxide. Oxygen dissolves at the surface. Greater the surface, greater the oxygen dissolving. This is the reason why fish don't last in round fish bowls: the bowl narrows at the top leaving a narrow surface.

In a tank which is not overcrowded with fish, there is no need of an aerator. Aquatic plants give off oxygen in the presence of light. This, plus the oxygen from the surface should be enough, normally.

But in case of a crowded aquarium an air pump is a must. The function of an air pump is to push air through a tube which ends near the bottom of the tank. The air bubbles rise to the surface causing water to agitate, which enhances the oxygen-carbon exchange.



The Aquarium.



Airstone and airpump.

Effective aeration is obtained by a fine stream of air bubbles. Finer the bubbles, better the aeration. Good aeration is also possible through the use of an air stone, which is pumice fitted to the top of the air tube.

The cost of an air pump ranges from Rs.15 to 60 and needless to say the costlier ones work better. Cheap pumps tend to be noisy and run hot after a while.

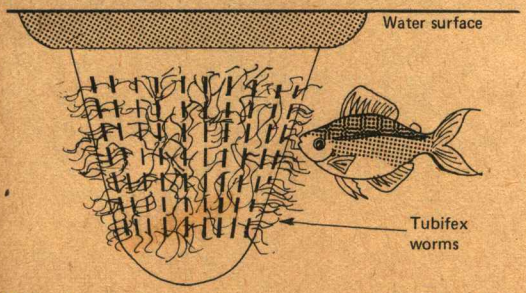
Gravel and rocks

Rocks in the aquarium create an aesthetic atmosphere, besides giving refuge to shy fishes behind them. The rocks which you use should not be limestone. Calcium from the limestone dissolves in water making it hard and basic. If you are doubtful about the rock, then just throw it away!

A word of caution: No sea shells or seashore sand should be placed in the aquarium. These contain salts and calcium and make the water hard. Most freshwater fishes need neutral water.

Plants

All plants under right water and light conditions grow fast. When you plan your aquarium make sure you leave plenty of room for them to grow.



A floating feeder.

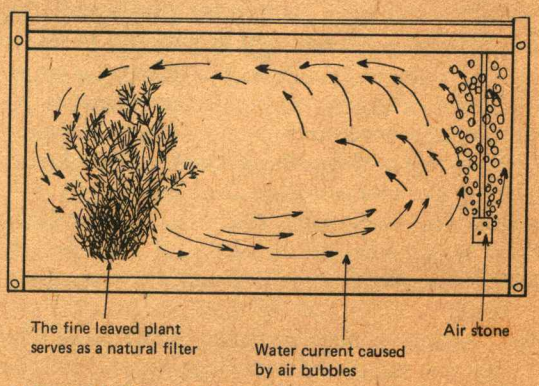
Aquatic plants need nitrates which are supplied by fishes through their droppings. Plants have a fine network of roots which absorb chemicals. In an aquarium with very fine gravel, it is difficult for plants to root and it may cause them to deteriorate.

Thermometers and heaters: Most tropical fish need a water temperature of about 75°F, but they will be happy at any temperature between 70 and 80°F. A thermometer will be required to check water temperature. In case it falls, it can be raised by floating an aluminium utensil with hot water till the tank water reaches the desired level.

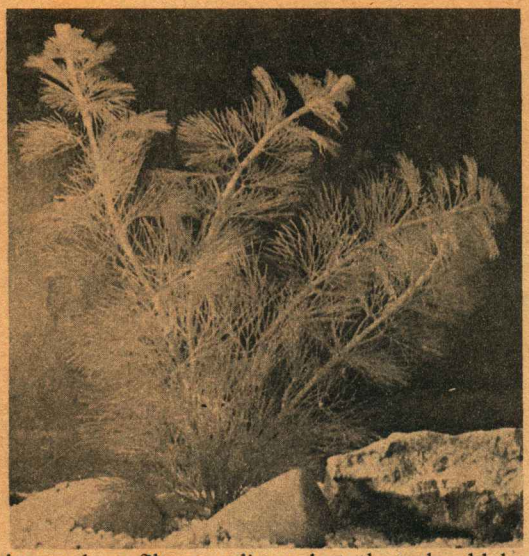
Some places are hot in summer and you will need to cool the water. This can be done by floating a plastic bag with ice cubes in it. But don't let the tank water mix with the ice water.

Water heaters are miniatures of household heaters. They are convenient way of raising water temperatures but they have to be constantly checked.

Filters: Water filters work basically on the principle of water displacement. Cotton wool, plastic foam and activated charcoal can be safe-



Movement of water currents.



ly used as filter mediums but they should be frequently replaced to avoid clogging.

There are various kinds of filter available. Eg, internal filter placed inside the aquarium, external filter placed outside and under-the gravel filter.

I

FISHES are sensitive to temperature and water compositions. The question that arises is what water to use in the aquarium.

Water differs in hardness and composition from place to place. There are many dissolved chemicals like limestones (calcium carbonate $CaCo_3$) which determine water hardness. This hardness is temporary and can even be removed by boiling, but is hardly practical considering the amount of water you may require. Dissolved magnesium salt gives permanent hardness to water.

The aquarist will need to know the hardness of the water in his area. If you ring up the water department in your city, they may oblige you by giving the water composition. There are some fishes that stay healthy in hard water, whereas there are others which need soft water. You need not worry about this very much for fishes are quite hardy and survive in any water provided it is not at extreme variance with its requirement.

Abrupt changes in water condition could be fatal for some fishes (specially those from the Characidae family which die of shock when there is a sudden change in water hardness or temperature).

II

WHAT DO fish eat and how much food they require?

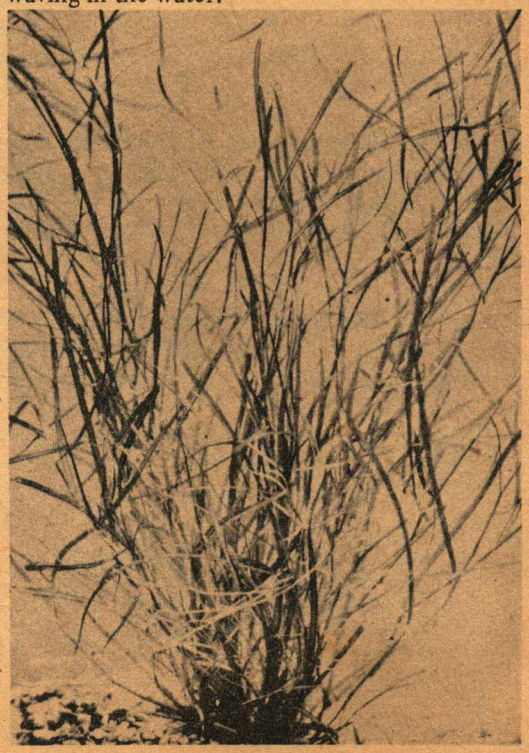
When you approach a fish tank you will notice that fish rush to the top of the tank and behave as if they were starving. This is what beginners do not understand. In reality this is the greedy instinct of fishes.

Fishes don't realise how much to eat. They keep on loading their stomachs till they die of suffocation due to overeating. You will be surprised to know that your fish can survive for almost a week without food. They can be fed both live as well as dried food. The former is preferable, if not a must.

Note: do not feed your fish with bread or biscuits. They have different ideas of a 'dessert'.

Live food:

1. Tubifex. These are worms found in stagnant pools and ditches. They are tiny red worms about an inch in length, of which half stays buried in mud and the other half constantly waving in the water.



Tubifex worms are aquatic and survive for long in aquarium water, but they are unsightly and deteriorate fast, fouling up the water. Your dealer will give you Tubifex in a plastic bag which should be emptied in a 10″ x 12″ photographic tray (which can be bought from a photographic store). Pour fresh tap water over a lump of these and shake them. This will separate dirt from worms. Keep the tray filled with water and change every three to four hours.

No dead/foul worms should be fed to the fish, likewise remove the worms from the feeder once the fish lose their interest in them.

Feed the fish thrice a day or more. You will have to judge through trial and experience how much food your fish need. Fishes are not vegetarians and love worms.

Tubifex should only be fed to fish which are big enough to eat them. If fed to tiny fish, they may get stuck in their throat.

2. Daphnia. Daphnia are tiny crustaceans found in stagnant pools and resemble fleas. They can be put in an aquarium when you go on a vacation, but since these too breathe oxygen, see that the aeration is good.

3. Mosquito larvae. These are ideal for fish breeding, when fish need to be brought into prime condition.

4. Infusoria. These are microscopic creatures hardly vivisle to naked eye. If they are available with your dealer, you can cultivate them yourself.

Infusoria should be fed to fish after they have hatched from their eggs. When they hatch, they have an egg yolk sac which provides them with nourishment. When this is over, they start swimming for food.

Dried foods:

These are flakes available in plastic cans at the fish dealers. Dried food is not desirable as it does not satisfy the cannibalistic instincts of fish. Nevertheless it is helpful when live food is in short supply. Dried food should be sprinkled sparingly on water surface, where fish can snap them off.

Dried food fouls up water fast and there should not be any surplus floating, which will catch fungus.

Apart from all these, you can feed your fish chopped meat, liver and pieces of fish which are rich in iodine. But be careful of bones which can get stuck in their throats.

III

THERE ARE no hard and fast rules for setting up an aquarium. Every aquarist has his own ways, though the basic rules are the same.

Fish tank should be cleaned thoroughly but not with soap or detergents.

Gravel too should be washed thoroughly. Wash it the way your mother washes rice before cooking. The water will turn milky, but will turn cleaner on repeated washing. No soaps or detergents again. Wash all salts off the gravel.

Water in which the fish is kept should always be aged: allowed to stand for at least 36 hours for the chlorine in it to dissipate. Chlorine is poisonous for fish, damaging the gills and delicate skin.

Place a ceramic soup cup in the centre of the aquarium and pour water into it, letting it overflow into the aquarium. If you pour directly, you may disturb a lot of gravel and make the water foggy.

Fill only a third of the tank with water, for then it is easier to place the plants without getting your hand fully wet.

The plants should be tucked down in the gravel upto the crown. Plant according to your imagination. Plants always grow in the direction of light. Some grow fast, while others slow, so leave plenty of room for growth and expansion.

Fit the thermometer at a corner in front where it can be read easily. Now carefully fill up the rest of the aquarium till the water brim is about half an inch below the top frame. Make a water mark here to let you know the amount of water to be replaced. Fish tend to swim about

near the feeder, so place the feeder at a place where you can get the best view of them.

Air pumps tend to run hot and to be on the safe side, place it on a higher level than the aquarium to avoid water rushing down the pipe when the pump is switched off. A good quality air pump should sufficiently feed six outlets.

After weeks of observation, you will find the plants rooted and you can think of buying fish. The selection should be done carefully, because some fishes are pugnatious and might tend to bully the others. Also see that your favourite fish is not the type that grows very huge. If you have an aquarium of 24 x 12 x 12, I would suggest the following types for the beginner:

* Two pairs of guppies (peecilia reticulatus)
* One pair of small Angels (Piterophillum scalare)
* Two pairs of Tetras (Characide family)
* Two pairs of Tiger Barbs (Barbus Tetrazona)
* Two pairs of Zebra Danios (Brachydanio rario)
* One male Siamese fighting fish (Betta splendous)

(only one of this must be kept. They fight with members of their own species)

* One pair of Loaches or Corydoras.

This selection assumes that you have an air pump which will be working 18 to 22 hours a day. If not, the number of these fishes should be reduced to half.

IV

YOUR dealer will give you the chosen fishes in a leakproof plastic bag. The fish can safely stay in this bag for an hour or so.

Float this bag in your aquarium without opening it for about fifteen minutes before releasing the fishes. This will help synchronise the temperature of the bag with that of the aquarium water. Fish should not be subjected to sudden changes in temperature.

Tempt your fishes with some Tubifex worms after a day or so. Don't try to feed the fish immediately after introduction to the tank, they will simply be too frightened to eat.

All fishes brought later should be isolated for a week before introduction. During this time watch them carefully for infections and diseases. Some may be infected with parasites though they look healthy.

To maintain a tropical freshwater aquarium you require very little time. Give your tank a professional look every day.

•Watch for any dead fishes. They should be removed immediately before other fishes eat them. The disease which caused their death may pass on to the healthy ones.

•Water which has evaporated should be replaced. Siphon off the detritus and sediment every fifteen days with a clear polythene tube of about ¾ inch diameter but the water removed must be replaced with fresh water.

•You will occasionally need to scrape off the algae which has grown on the aquarium glass. Wipe the glass clean with a pad of cotton wool, or in case of a hard growth, scrape it off with a blade. There are many species of fishes which include algae in their diet. (like gold fish, Black Mollies etc.).

•Check the temperature regularly and raise or lower it accordingly.

•Clip away rotting leaves of the plants.

•No overfeeding and no leftovers: two easy ways to a polluted fish tank.

•Observe every fish individually and make sure it is free of parasites and other deformities. If any fish tends to bully others by serious fighting it should be isolated.

•Clean filter regularly to ensure perfect filteration of water. Cloggy filters often breed bacteria.

•If you need to net your fish do it with patience. They will naturally flee at the sight of the net, and to net them, you need smartness not speed. When you need to transfer your fish from one tank to another, be gentle.

•Never knock on the glass of the aquarium with fingers. The impact of the sound produced is so immense for the fish that it might even get thrown off with fatal consequences.

V

COMMON diseases of fish are easy to cure. By far, the majority of piscine diseases are contagious, so the first step is to ensure that no diseased fish comes in contact with a healthy one.

Infection can also spread by use of the same net which has been used to catch an infected fish.

Below are some symptoms and probable causes.

•*Closed fins and fast respiration.*

This is an indication of a water pollution or

insufficient air, in which case you might find fishes swimming near the surface and gasping for air. It might also be caused by wrong temperature.

•*Fish rubbing themselves against gravel and rock.*

This is due to an irritation in the skin which might be an early symptom for white spot disease, which we shall discuss later, as it is the most common and infectious of the diseases.

•*Bloated body and protruding scales.*

This is due to an infection called Dropsy. Virus makes the body cavity accumulate a fluid which forces the scales to stand at right angle and causes the body to bloat. Treat this condition with a 250 mg. capsule of chloromycetin (chloramphenicol) dissolved in a gallon of water. Fish of course, should be isolated. Dropsy is not contagious, but it does spread if the infected fish is eaten by healthy ones.

•*Swollen eyes.*

This disease is common in Siamese Fighting Fish (Betta splendous) and it might lose its eye if not treated. Pop-eye, as it is known, can be cured by keeping the infected fish in a mild solution of potassium bichromate (four or five tiny grains per litre of water).

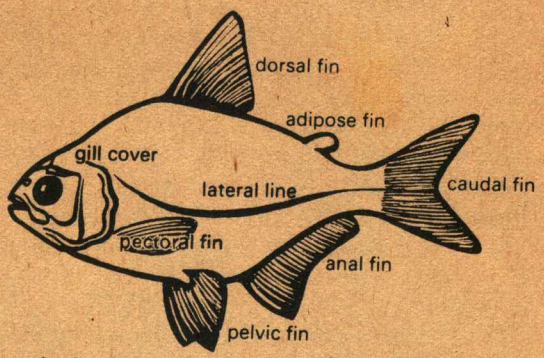
•*The yellow look.*

The suspect is Velvet disease. This is a condition caused by a parasite called Oodinium Limneticum which feeds on the skin of the fish. The parasite grows on the skin of the fish and drops off after maturing, forming a cyst which breeds tiny daughter cells. The daughter cells adhere to the fish skin and continues the cycle. This condition can be cured by isolating all the fishes in a bare aquarium with a solution of one gallon water; 5 drops of Acriflavin liquid. Acriflavin is a yellow liquid available with your dealer. The main tank should then be thoroughly disinfected with potassium permanganate.

•*Cottons like growth*

This is a fungus infection which can be cured by methylene blue solution. Place the fish in a solution of a gallon water, 5 drops of methylene blue. Methylene blue can harm the plants as the blue colour does not let the light reach them, so the treatment should be carried out in an unplanted tank.

Methylene blue is a very important chemical



which every aquarist must have. It can cure a large number of diseases.

•*Loss of appetite and thinness.*

This condition might probably be because of a Tuberculosis infection. Try treating the fish with a 250 mg. capsule of terramycin (oxytetracline) in a gallon of water.

Terramycin deteriorates fast and a new solution should be prepared after three days.

•*Rotting fins.*

Fin-rot is a disease where the infection starts eating up the fins and if not treated, might eat up the whole fin. Treat the fish with methylene blue or alternatively with penicillin.

•*Injury.*

An injured fish is very prone to infection, especially fungus infection. Keep the fish in a mild solution of methylene blue until it recovers.

•*The Eyes of the angel fish (pterophyllum scalare) becoming opaque.*

Angel fish cannot tolerate low temperature (80°F being the ideal temperature for it). Raise the temperature to 85°F and then lower it to 80° F. This will get rid of the problem, but if not cared for, the fish may lose its eye-sight.

White spot Disease.

This is the most common and notorious of disease in the fresh water aquarium and if unchecked, can kill all the fishes. It is caused by a protozoan parasite called Ichlyophthirius multifilins.

Fishes catch this disease when conditions are not right in the aquarium water, e.g. low temperature, when resistance is reduced. The early sign of the outbreak of this disease is fishes rubbing themselves against the gravel and rocks. If you observe them closely, you will find tiny white spots over their body and fins.

Like 'velvet', the white spot cyst thrive on

the skin of the fish leaving it when it is matured. The cyst then falls to the bottom of the aquarium where it produces daughter cells. The time taken depends on the water temperature, higher the temperature, faster the cycle.

The cyst then bursts releasing these daughter cells which now look for the host. The daughter cells die if they do not find a host. An infected tank left without fishes for ten days will become clear of the Ich. Fishes should be transferred to another tank.

The infected fishes transferred in a bare tank should be treated with methylene blue drops mixed in the water. The water should become a darkish yet transparent blue. The fish will be cleared of Ich in about ten days and in case if the blue of the methylene blue fades, add more drops.

Many aquarists have an idea that to cure white spot, the temperature should be raised. But that is not true. High temperature merely speeds the life cycle of the Ich, it does not actually destroy them. The temperature needs to be increased, so that it ensures more free swimming parasites which are easier to kill them the hardened cysts.

Kinds of fishes

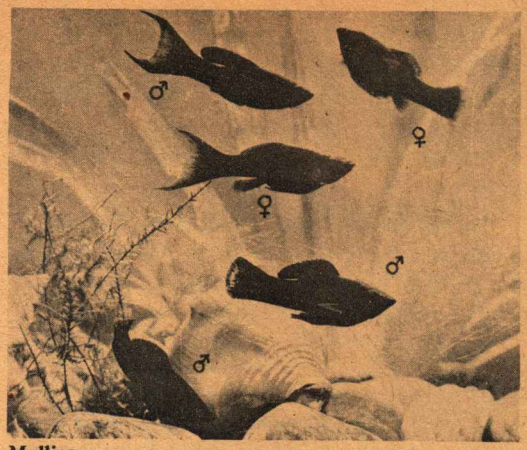
ALL species of fish are known by two names: First the popular name and second the latin name; the latter being more reliable. For example *Mollienesia Latipinna, Mollienesia velifera* and *Mollienesia sphenops* are all called Mollies but adding the Latin name clarifies the species.

We will discuss fishes that are easily available here.

A: Family Poecillidae (Live-bearers)

Live-bearers come from Central and South America. They are ovoviviparous i.e. once the female has produced the egg, no further care is taken of it by her. The eggs are collected in a brood pouch and are fertilized there by the male. The eggs hatch and the fry develop inside the pouch itself and are released when they are capable of swimming and eating by themselves.

The reproduction of Live-bearers is of considerable interest. The Anal fin of the male is modified into an organ called the gonopodium. This organ is used to fertilize the female. The gonopodium, which normally is pointing backwards is twisted forward during the actual mating. It is inserted inside the female's vent, and the sperms are ejected into it, fertilizing the female.



Mollies.

Female Live-bearers are capable of preserving the excess sperms inside the brood pouch, using it after the first brood is released. One mating can produce nearly four to five broods, each containing as much as 100 to 150 offsprings.

The gestation period is about one month, but can vary depending upon the species and the temperature. It is fairly easy to breed Live-bearers in fact you actually have to separate the sexes to stop them breeding.

Live-bearers, if given the right conditions and food, are known to live as long as five years.

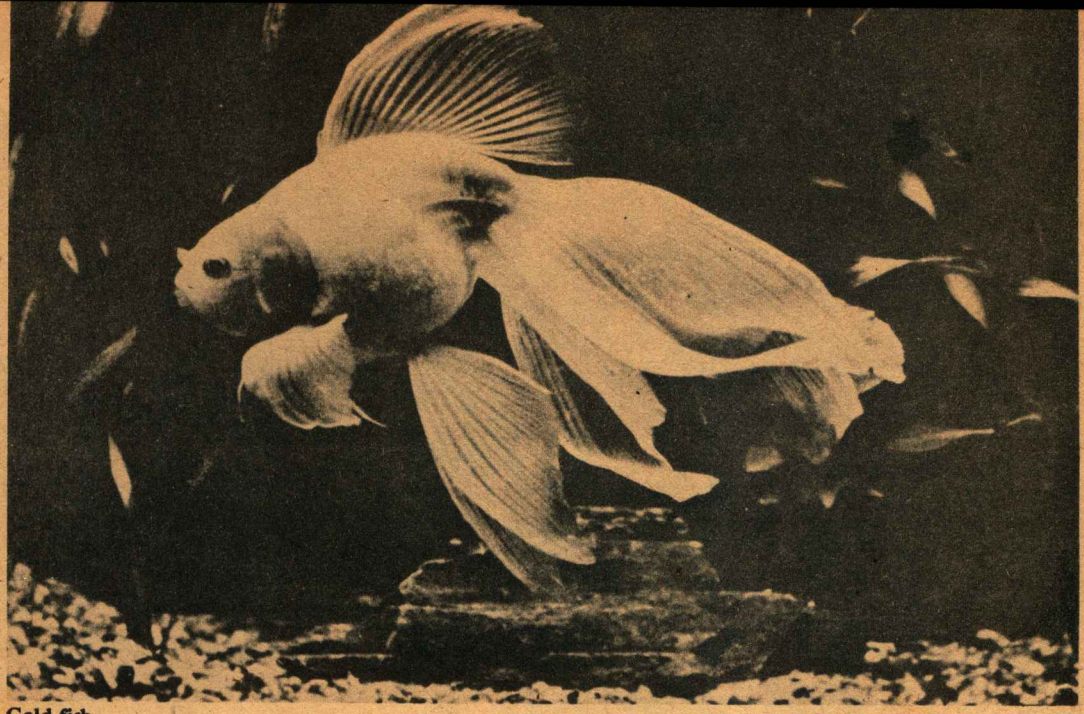
Males court the female with a display of fins and a 'courtship dance'. The female can get fertilized in just three hours after being placed with the male. It is a good idea to have one male to two females, so that one female can get rest while the other is being chased by the male.

Pregnant females should be isolated if the offsprings are to be saved from being eaten by other fishes. This female will eat her own brood if given a chance. To avoid that, cover the bottom glass with marbles and place fine leaved plants to serve as the cover for offsprings to hide.

The fry of Live-bearers has a tendency to rush towards the light direction as soon as they are born, so place a big bunch of cobomba floating at the surface near the light source.

The Guppy (Poecillia raticulatus)

The Guppy is the most popular species of the family Poecillidae. It originates from Central America and in its wild form is quite plain and greyish in colour.



Gold fish.

The hybrids of this grey Guppies are in many different but beautiful forms. For example: The greenlace Guppy, veil-tail Guppy, Golden Guppy, Swordtail Guppy etc.

Guppies like all Live-bearers, breed profusely. So care should be taken to stop mixed breeding.

Mollies

Mollies are also found in a variety of forms. But they have a basic colouring of jet black. The different forms include the short finned Molly *(Mollienesia sphenops)*, the Lyretailed Molly and the Sail-fin Molly *(Mollienesia velifera)*.

Water temperature: 60 – 90°F.

Foods: Tubifex, Daphnia, Dried foods, algae, and vegetable matters.

Swordtails and platies

Swordtails and platies belong to the same genus. Many colour variations are bred, like, green, black red, albino and even combinations of two colours.

The males are easily identified by the gonopodium and a 'sword' which is an extension of their tails. There are some hybrids which have elongated fins and some even double swords.

B. Family Cyprinidae (carps)

Carps are basically food fish but there are a lot of species which are popular aquarium fish which include Danios, Barbs, Rasaboras, Mountain Minnows and Gold Fishes.

C. Family Anabantidae (Labyrinth fishes)

Fishes from Anabantidae are distinguished by a special respiratory organ called the labyrinth. They frequently come to the water surface to take a gulp of air. The gulp of air is forced inside this lybrinth, where the exchange of gas takes place.

Labyrinth fishes should be introduced to a community aquarium with care because, most of them are bullies and are aggressive.

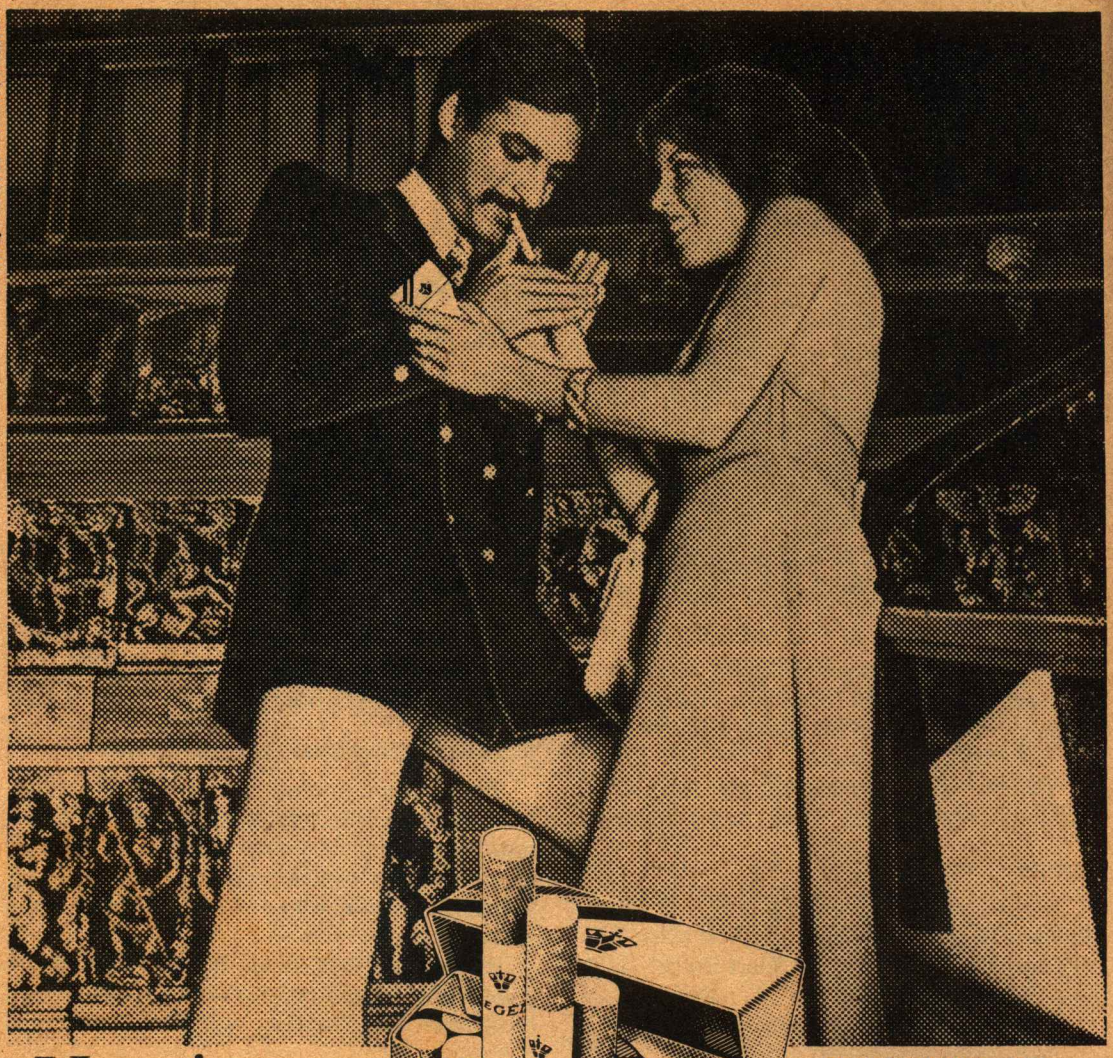
The Siamese Fighting Fishes (Betta splendous)

This is a beautiful fish which is easy to keep and breed. The males are identified by their long flowing fins specially the dorsal fin and the females have short fins.

The males are very, very aggressive especially towards the other males. So never keep two males of bettas together: they will never rest till one of them is killed.

The male will chase, bite and push the female, but don't remove the female unless there is a danger of her getting killed. After two or three days of this fighting you will find the female below the nest with the male. The male attracts the female below the nest and embraces or wraps himself around her. The eggs are released and both drift downwards. The male recovers

Courtesy: Hotel Connemara, Madras



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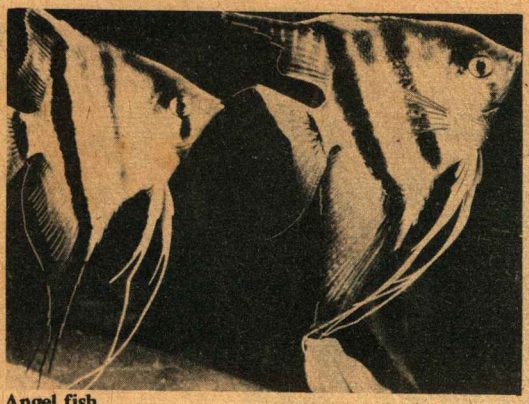
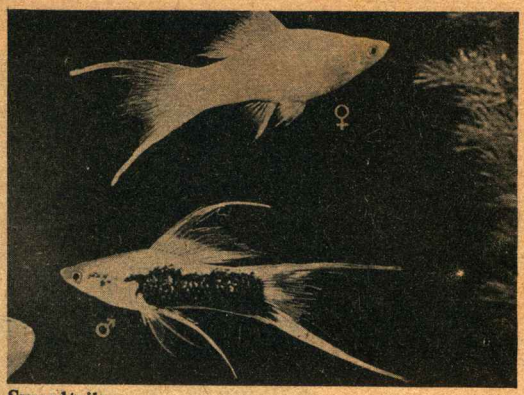


Angel fish.



Swordtails.

the eggs and pushes them into the nest, a bubble nest built by the female.

As soon as the breeding is over remove the female or the male is sure to kill her. The eggs and the fry can be allowed to be looked after by the male. Remove him after the fry is free swimming when he tends to eat them.

Family Characidae **(Characius)**

Family characidae or characius come from Central Africa, and Central and South America. It also includes the most feared predator, the Pirhana.

There are a lot of species which are included in this family, practically all are capable of staying in aquarium. The Characius can be identified by their adipose fin, i.e. a special tiny fin behind the dorsal fin.

Family Cichlidae **(cichlids)**

Cichlids have their distribution in Southern and Central America, Africa and coastal India. If seen in true sense, they are not aquarium fishes. but their interesting breeding habits make them popular. Cichlids usually grow big and are very aggressive. It is a good idea to give them a tank by themselves.

Cichlids show a unique responsibility in bringing up their fry, parents guarding the young till they are old enough to look after themselves. They are very partial to live foods and will refuse dried foods.

To breed cichlids you will have to buy six to eight young ones of that species and let them grow up together. They will pair off by themselves, and you can keep a track of who goes steady with whom. If you are satisfied that a pair has been achieved, remove others.

The pair might breed but you will need patience because they don't breed as easy as other fishes. Prior to spawning, the parents will thoroughly clean the surface on which they are going to lay the eggs.

The female lays a row of five or six eggs and moves aside for the male who with the same action deposits the sperms over the eggs. This continues till the female is empty of eggs, the number of which depends upon the species concerned.

After the eggs are layed, the parents take turns in fanning them with their fins. They guard the eggs removing all the white infertile ones. The eggs hatch after about 72 hours and take a week to become free swimming. They can be kept for a week more with their parents.

When you isolate the parents from the fry, a serious quarrel amongst the parents can occur, each blaming the other for the loss of fry. You might need to segregate them for some time.

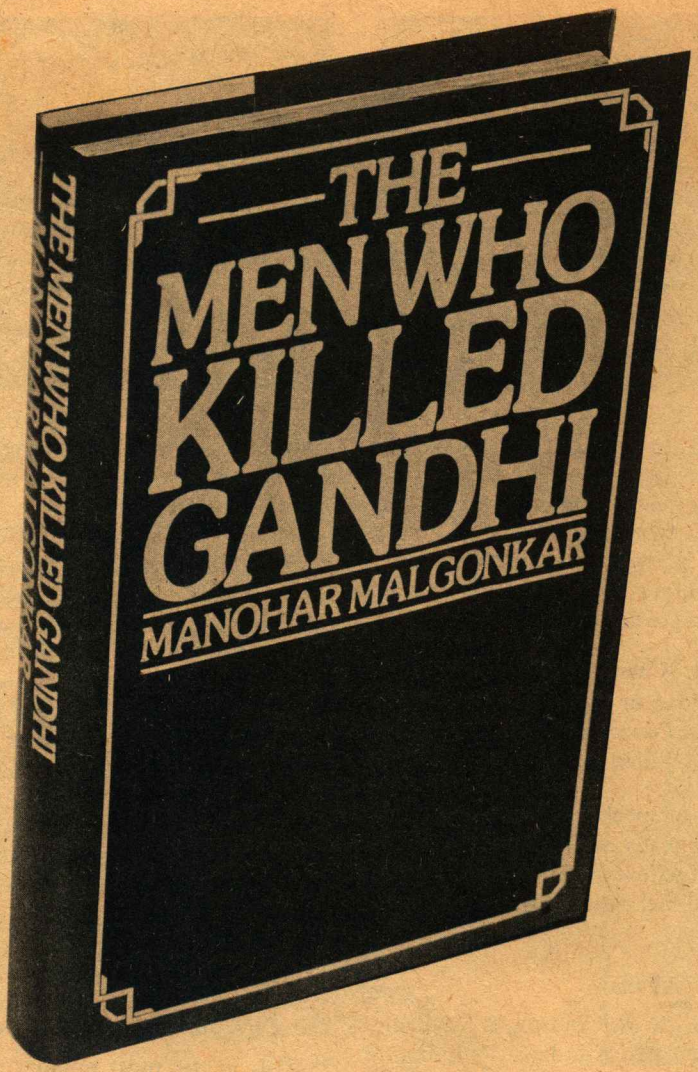
The Angel fish **(Pterophyllum scalare)**

This is the most popular species from the cichlids, and the most easily available. They are a peaceful species but prefer high temperature. There are many hybrids and variations in Angel fish and breeders have been successful in breeding all black and veil tails. Lately an albino form has also appeared.

* * *

When you attempt to breed any fish, use only good fishes. Some are so easy to breed, that they have degenerated into poor specimens. Make sure that the fish you intend to breed are properly conditioned and are ripe enough to breed.

It is easy to breed i.e. you might manage to spawn them, but the real test is in bringing up the fry, give them plenty of room to grow and feed them healthy foods. **THE END**



Distance lends not only enchantment, but also a sense of perspective. Three decades after the Mahatma was assassinated, the issues are still very much clouded. Every analysis has either tended to romanticise it or merely whip up popular frenzy to the point of high drama. We have, therefore, great pleasure in bringing you MANOHAR MALGONKAR's 'The Men Who Killed Gandhi'.

In the grand tradition of the documentary novel, the author unravels the web of evidence about the men who killed the Mahatma, their motives and the aftermath. Under the skilful pen of Malgonkar, Godse, Apte and others come amazingly alive. Indeed, the book reconstructs not only the drama of murder, but also clearly puts across an essential part of Indian History.

One of India's foremost writers of fiction, Malgonkar came to writing via big game hunting and to find him hot on the spoor of his theme is a delightful experience. He has won international critical acclaim with his books The Distant Drums, Combat of Shadows, The Princess and A Bend in the Ganges. No wonder the literary critic of the New York Times calls him one of the ablest living novelists in the world.

Nathuram Godse, brought up as a girl, serious and fanatically austere, pledged to celibacy and to Savarkar's ideals. . . and Narayan Apte, quickwitted, lively, fond of his wine and women. . . both hated the Muslim as much as the British, both considered Gandhi the traitor to the Hindu cause who had no business to live.

THE MEN WHO KILLED GANDHI

By Manohar Malgonkar

EVEN AS GANDHI was talking to Mountbatten, the news that he had decided to go on fast was being broadcast over the news media in all of India's fourteen languages. In Poona, two men sitting in a shoddy newspaper office read it over their teleprinter. Read it and suddenly made *their* great decision: Gandhi had to be killed.

Their names were Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte; they were the Editor and Manager respectively of a Marathi-language daily newspaper, the *Hindu Rashtra.* No one knows which one first thought of murdering Gandhi, because to the end they maintained that only one of them, Nathuram, was responsible for the killing. It is more than likely that they both thought of it at the same moment for, in matters such as this, their thoughts were strangely in accord. More than a year later, and only days before he was hanged, Apte was to tell Nathuram Godse's brother Gopal:

In the four and-a-half years that Nathuram and I worked together, we found that we often thought of the same thing at the same time. Nathuram would send a leading article from wherever he had gone to, and it would turn out that I had already written on the same subject and on the same lines. And as to our devotion to the cause, we were like one mind in two bodies.

'The cause' was Hindu Sanghatan, which envisaged the unification and revitalization of the Hindus so that they should stand up and fight for their political rights instead of giving in to the Muslims as they had done in the past. And the supreme, almost sacred, goal of the Sanghatan movement was to prevent the dismemberment of India.

It was thus a cause already lost, for India had been divided and there was nothing they could do to put it together again. They were bitter, angry, frustrated. The British had perpetrated a fraud, and the Congress had betrayed the nation. The independence of India to them was a mockery, an insult, because had not a limb from Mother India's body been torn away in the process? August 15, the day of Independence, they had observed as a day of mourning.

For weeks, months, they and their few companions had sat, brooded and racked their brains to think of doing something spectacular that would rock the nation. They had talked of destroying an ammunition train on its way to Pakistan, of killing Jinnah and his Assembly in one fell swoop, of blowing up bridges, of carrying out commando-type raids into the Hyderabad State (which, until then, had not been absorbed into India), and they had even

Excerpts from the book to be published in October 1978 by The Macmillan Company of India Limited.
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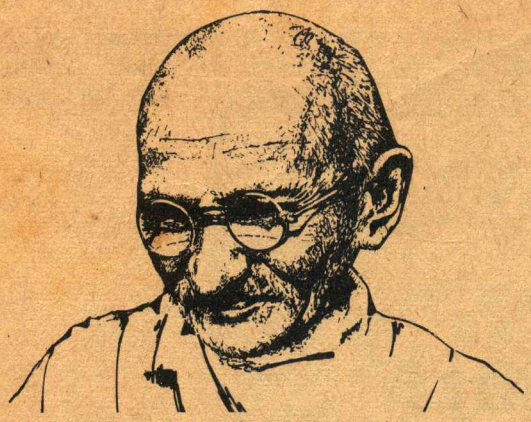


begun, at considerable expense and risk, to stock up explosives and weapons that would enable them to undertake these tasks.

Now, suddenly, their target was revealed to them as in a flash. 'I thought it to be my duty to put an end to the life of the so-called Father of the Nation,' Nathuram Godse was to testify with visible pride.

By carrying out his duty, Nathuram has qualified himself for a sort of odious immortality.

Orthodox family

NATHURAM Godse was born into an orthodox Brahmin family which came from a small village called Uksan, which is ten miles from the wayside railway station of Kamshet, on the Bombay-Poona line. Nathuram's father, Vinayak Godse, was a minor official in the Postal Department. In 1892, when he was seventeen, he was married to a girl who was barely ten years old. Vinayak's first child was a boy, and the second a girl. This first son died before he was two years old. After that there were two more sons, both of whom died in their infancy.

At the turn of the century, to families such as Vinayak Godse's, the fact that three sons had died one after the other while a daughter had survived held a clear warning: their male children bore a curse. One remedy, which had often proved effective, lay in offering to bring up the next boy as though he were a girl. That might appease the Fates.

So Vinayak and his wife offered prayers. The next child, if it were a boy, would be brought up as though he were a girl. His left nostril would be pierced to take a *nath* or nose-ring.

The next child was a boy, born on 10 May 1910. Even though he was named Ramchandra, which name is customarily shortened to Ram, because his nose was pierced to take a *nath* the pretence that he was a girl was taken a step further by his parents, who began to call him Nathuram, or 'Ram who wears a nose-ring'. The name stuck.

As far as placating the evil spirits was concerned, the artifice was wholly successful. Nathuram lived through infancy and grew up to be a strong child, and so did three other brothers, who followed him, among whom only Gopal, who was born in 1920, figured in the assassination of Gandhi. Psychologists may find some explanation for his warped mental processes in the fact that Nathuram was brought up as a girl.

The family was large—four sons and two daughters—and poor. The father was constantly transferred to be Postmaster in small, out-of-the-way townships all over the Bombay Presidency. After Nathuram had finished primary schooling in his mothertongue, Marathi, he was sent to Poona to study for the matriculation examination.

As a child, his parents and brothers believed that he possessed oracular powers. He would sit before the family goddess, staring fixedly at a spot of soot smeared in the exact centre of a copper tray, and soon fall into a trance. While in trance, he would see some figures or writing in the black spot before him, much as a crystal-gazer is supposed to see in his glass ball. Then one or other member of the family would ask him questions. His answers were believed to be those of the goddess, who spoke through his mouth.

His brother Gopal, who saw several of these performances, writes: 'He would recite parts of scriptures or Sanskrit hymns which he never remembered to have memorized. . . .and nor, when the trance was over, could he repeat them, or indeed remember what he had recited.'

Other interests

IT WAS not till he was nearly sixteen that Nathuram gave up the practice of serving as a medium between the family deity and the family. He had become more wordly and less devout, his brother Gopal laments, and his powers of concentration must have been dimi-

nished.

There were other interests. Despite this early upbringing as a girl, he had grown into a strapping youth who was fond of physical exercise and who took special pride in his prowess as a swimmer. His instincts were almost abnormally wholesome. He revelled in being the neighbourhood do-gooder, devoting himself to such chores as might have been taken on by an eager boy scout. He was always being called upon to fish out lost vessels from village wells, rescue cats, run errands for the sick, serve at temple functions and in the marriage festivities of the poorer neighbours. While the family lived in Lonavla, he rescued an untouchable child that had fallen into a well. When later in the day he told his parents about it, he was scolded for having come into the house without first taking a purifying bath—he had been polluted by the touch of the child!

At the time, such sentiments in a Brahmin family were quite normal, but Nathuram himself was not bothered by them. Later, much to the distress of his parents, he was to come out as a fierce protagonist for the removal of untouchability.

He read voraciously, but only in subjects which interested him, such as mythology, scriptures and history, and only in the Marathi language. He neglected his normal schoolwork and found the English language difficult to learn. The consequence was that he failed to pass the matric.

The matriculation examination was, in those days, an essential qualification for the lowest grades of clerical jobs in government offices, and Nathuram's father, who was now close to retirement himself, was anxious to get his son employed in his own department. He implored Nathuram to sit for the examination again, but Nathuram, who by this time had already come under the influence of Gandhi's movement for non-co-operation with the British Raj, shrank at the thought of taking a government job. He was fed up with schoolwork anyway and wanted to start earning his own living. He left Poona and came to live with his father, who was then in Karjat. There, for a year or two, he tried his hand at learning to be a carpenter, but just as he was getting to be proficient, his father was transferred, and the family had to move again.

The year was 1929, and Nathuram was nineteen years old. This time they were going to Ratnagiri, a sleepy town on the west coast, so obscure that it was not even listed in Murray's exhaustive *Guide to India*. Ratnagiri's principal claim to a place in history was that the British had exiled the last ruler of Burma, King Thibaw, there. Thibaw had died thirteen years earlier, and Ratnagiri had lapsed into what it had always been—a backward place where minor government officials were sent to mark time for their pensions.

Nathuram had rejoiced. He had heard that Ratnagiri now housed another political prisoner, an Indian brought back from the penal station in the Andamans to serve out the remaining years of his sentence of fifty years' imprisonment. Here the British had given him a bungalow and the freedom to move about within the confines of the district; he was required to abstain from all political activities, but was permitted visitors.

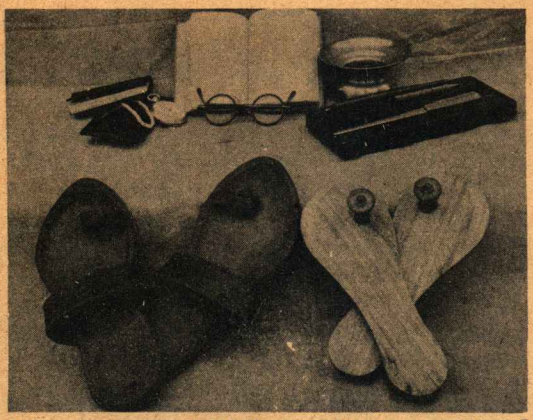
HE WAS Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the man who had burst suddenly on to the Indian political scene and had been despatched by the British to the penal colony in the Andamans; scholar, historian, poet, religious reformer, a trained barrister, but, above all, a firebrand patriot who had galvanized the youth of his generation by his open advocacy of an armed uprising against the British.

Within three days of his arrival in Ratnagiri, Nathuram went to see Savarkar.

Once he had come under Savarkar's influence, Nathuram was never the same man again. The high school dropout who would have been willing to live out his days as a village carpenter was transformed into a fiery champion of all the causes that Savarkar stood for, political, social, religious; freedom from British rule, the inviolability of the motherland, the purification of the Marathi language, the abolition of the caste system, the emancipation of the depressed classes and, a hitherto unheard-of thing, the reconversion of Hindus who had been enticed into Islam or Christianity.

Nathuram venerated Savarkar as a guru, as someone who bore a touch of divinity. And it was his blind devotion to the potent preachings of the master, and his shattering disillusionment at the way everything in Savarkar's scenario had gone wrong, that ultimately led Nathuram to the insane expedient of murder and self-immolation.

But conversely, it is also true that, while



his meeting with Nathuram Godse could not have made much difference to Savarkar's life at the time, nineteen years later, Nathuram's continuing attachment to him was to provide the excuse to the police (and possibly to his political enemies) for dragging him into the Gandhi murder case. The strain of the trial, and the year spent in prison while it lasted, wrecked Savarkar's health and finished him as a force in India's politics.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was born in 1883 in a small village near the town of Nasik; in 1910, he was shut up for life in the penal colony in the Andamans. It is difficult to think of anyone else who has crammed so much activity into the twentyseven years that he had lived as a free man, or of anyone who had lived them more dangerously.

He was only twelve when he organized a gang of his schoolmates to fight off the village bullies. At sixteen, while he was kept in Nasik for his higher schooling, he formed a revolutionary society to overthrow the British Raj. He barely made the grades at school but knew far more than his teacher about Indian history and the Sanskrit classics, and gave regular talks on these subjects at local functions. In 1901, when after passing his matriculation examination he left Nasik to join a college in Poona, the leading men of the town joined together to give him a hearty send-off.

As a college student in Poona, he became 'a notable figure in political gatherings', and thus inevitably came under police surveillance. In his final year, he flung himself with gusto into the Swadeshi movement which, among other things, required the burning of British-made articles of clothing in public bonfires. For these activities he was rusticated from his college and thus became the first Indian student to be sent down from a college for political reasons.

When, however, the time for the BA examination came, the authorities relented and let him sit for it. He managed to pass and immediately set out to try to bring his various organizations together and to win converts to his movement for an armed revolt against the Raj. He went from village to village, giving rousing talks, composed and sang patriotic ballads, and published a stack of pamphlets propounding his views on the problems facing the Indian people. These publications were summarily proscribed and their possession made an offence.

Thus, at the age of twenty-two, Savarkar had made himself one of the most intrepid opponents of British rule in India. At this stage, realizing that he did not possess a broad enough base of knowledge for the role he had taken on, and anxious to equip himself more adequately for it by a few more years of study and travel, he decided to leave India and go to England to qualify as a barrister.

The Indian Government, which was on the point of arresting him on a charge of sedition, must have breathed a sigh of relief at this turn of events. Savarkar could now be written off as a troublemaker. It was almost certain that England would transform him into a 'wog', a Westernized Oriental Gentleman.

Brown sahibs

THAT was the general pattern of the times. Indian boys went to study at the great colleges of England, goggled at the wonders of the western world and were tamed by the civilizing influences of their environment. They invariably returned as brown sahibs. Many fell in love with English girls, and some brought back white wives.

Savarkar conformed to the pattern only by falling in love with an English girl, whose name was Margaret Lawrence. Otherwise he remained defiantly Indian. He joined Gray's Inn and four years later qualified to practise at the Bar. Throughout his time in England, he pressed on with his political activities at the same relentless tempo. He started what was called the Free India Society, whose weekly meetings were conducted quite openly. But, from among the members of the Society, he formed an inner circle of young men who, like himself, believed in revolutionary methods. Between them they raised a fund to learn the secret of making

bombs, and despatched three volunteers to Paris to find 'some Russian revolutionary who might initiate them into the mysteries'. In Paris, they were 'duped and deceived by a bogus professor', and their search seemed destined to end in failure. But 'At last a man was found, a Russian exile. He taught them the art of making explosives and the best way of utilizing them in revolutionary work, handed over an authoritative booklet describing and illustrating all sorts of bombs and their uses—and did not take a pie.'

This manual for making bombs was, according to the police in India, printed and distributed by Savarkar from London. Copies soon reached India and were to turn up in police searches in several widely distant parts of the country; Calcutta, Allahabad, Lahore, Nasik and Poona. A year later, one was discovered in the house of Savarkar's eldest brother, Babarao, and clinched the Government's case that he was preparing to 'wage war against His Majesty the King Emperor'. Babarao was sentenced to transportation for life.

In 1908, the home-made bomb made its appearance in India's struggle against the Raj. Its intended victim was a Mr. Kingsford, the District Judge in a place called Muzaffarpur, in Bengal; Kingsford was singled out for this punishment because he had ordered the whipping of a boy named Sushil Chandra Sen for getting into a fight with the police. A young man called Khudiram Bose stationed himself at the entrance of the British Club in Muzaffarpur and threw the bomb into a carriage which he believed to be Mr. Kingsford's. It was the wrong carriage and contained two women, a Mrs. Kennedy and her daughter. Both were killed.

While the bomb was being tried out in India, Savarkar had gone on working tirelessly. Spaced between the 'daily discussions, the weekly meetings, the ceaseless work of writing, printing, packing and posting thousands of revolutionary pamphlets and booklets to hundreds of addresses in India', he contributed regularly to a newspaper called *Talwar* or 'The Sword' which was published in Paris, and brought out a Marathi translation of the life of Guiseppe Mazzini, the Italian revolutionary. The book became an instant success in India, and the Government found it necessary to proscribe it and 'to hunt out its copies' wherever they could be found.

His next project was the writing of what he called the true history of 'the war of Independence of 1857', which the British had always referred to as 'the Mutiny of 1857'. This book, too, Savarkar wrote in Marathi, and as he completed the chapters would read them out at the weekly meetings of the Free India Society, translating the sentences into English as he went along. British secret agents who had infiltrated the Society managed to steal two chapters of the book, which they sent to India. The Indian Government considered the material so inflammatory that it took the quite unprecedented step of banning the book before it was published, or even fully written.

Savarkar rewrote the two missing chapters and completed the book in time for publication in 1907, the fiftieth anniversary of the revolt. A copy of the manuscript was smuggled into India, where an obscure publisher in Sholapur undertook to print it secretly. But the police were already on the lookout for the book. Tipped off in advance by a friendly policeman that his premises were about to be raided, the publisher hastily distributed his type and sent the manuscript to Savarkar's friends in Poona for safe keeping. After that it was impossible to find another publisher in India.

Meanwhile, in England, Savarkar was busy translating the book into English. The English edition was eventually published in Holland. Patrons of the Free India Society enthusiastically bought hundreds of copies for free distribution in India. They were sent out in covers which bore the titles of the more popular works of Charles Dickens and Sir Walter Scott. Supporters of the cause in America soon brought out an edition of their own and began to compete with their counterparts in Europe in sending free copies to addresses in India.

Many of these copies were discovered by the Indian police; and the Indian Government, now convinced that Savarkar, despite his infatuation for an English girl, was not going to be turned into a docile sahib, served an order on him forbidding him to return to India.

Madanlal Dhingra

IN LONDON, in 1909, Madanlal Dhingra, an active member of the Free India Society and a close friend of Savarkar, shot and killed Sir Curzon Wylie, who had been the Government's prosecutor in the cases against Khudiram Bose and the other terrorists in Bengal. Dhingra

gave himself up and was found to carry in his pocket a statement that he had killed Wylie 'to avenge the inhuman sentences passed by the British officials on Indian youths. . . .whose only crime was that they had taken up arms to free their motherland'.

Savarkar, who in any case had been too close to Dhingra to escape the suspicion that he was somehow connected with the murder, made himself even more conspicuous to the police. He sought an interview with Dhingra while he was held in custody, raised a fund for his defence, and openly opposed a resolution sponsored by other Indians in England to condemn the murder.

Scotland Yard began to keep a close watch on him, and in India the police stepped up their efforts to root out his movement. At this stage, someone threw a bomb at Lord Minto while he was on a visit to Ahmedabad, and even before the police had discovered the culprit, in Nasik, Savarkar's home town, a man called Kanhere shot and killed Mr. A.M.T. Jackson, the British Collector, 'to avenge the sentence of transportation passed on Savarkar's elder brother, Babarao'.

The police suspected that the pistol with which Jackson was killed was supplied by Savarkar from London, and the Anglo-Indian press angrily demanded why 'the man who was at the bottom of all this nefarious revolutionary activity (was not) made to pay the penalty for all these crimes.' Sensing that his arrest was imminent, Savarkar's friends hustled him off to Paris, where for a few weeks Savarkar, according to an anonymous biographer, busied himself with 'infusing a new life into the small but influential colony of Indians living there'. But soon Paris began to pall. He longed to go back to India and take up fight on the actual battleground. But India had been forbidden to him and he knew that he would be arrested even before he stepped on its shore. So he decided to go back to London, which seemed nearer the scene of action. Many people believed that he had gone back because he was pining for Margaret Lawrence. In the event he never saw Margaret again.

He was arrested as his train pulled into Victoria Station. He was remanded in Brixton Prison where he was served a warrant for extradition to India; it seemed that the Indian Government had reversed its decision to extern him and now wanted to try him in India for the offence of waging war against the King. He was to be taken back as a maximum-security prisoner and with a police escort headed by a deputy superintendent of the Bombay police, C.J. Power, who had been sent all the way from India to bring him back.

In London, Scotland Yard deputed their own man, Detective-Inspector Edward Josh Parker, to assist Power and his men in guarding their prisoner on his homeward journey. As a precaution against the possibility of Savarkar's influential friends in Paris moving a French court to secure his release on a petition of hebeas corpus while he happened to be on French soil, it was decided not to take him by the normal overland route through France. Instead special accommodation was engaged on a ship going all the way to India, SS *Maurea*, and in her Savarkar was kept under watch night and day. Even when he went to the toilet two guards were required to sit outside the door and watch him in a mirror that had been specially fitted to the ceiling in front of a small opening cut into the door.

For some unexplained reason the *Maurea* put into Marseille. All night Savarkar lay awake, thinking of some way to escape and, just before dawn, asked to be allowed to use the toilet. The two guards took him to it and stood outside the door, Savarkar bolted the door and hung his dressing-gown over the opening. Then he made a grab for the port-hole, wriggled through the narrow opening and hurled himself into the sea even as the guards were trying to break open the door.

He had always been a strong swimmer and reached the shore before his pursuers, who had to wait for a boat to be lowered. He was now on the French soil, and all he had to do was to find a policeman and demand political asylum.

The dockside streets of Marseille were already astir and the trams had begun to ply. Savarkar, clad only in a pair of wringing wet striped pyjamas and barefoot, ran over the cobbled streets, pursued by a posse of frantic English and Indian policemen yelling 'Stop thief! Stop thief!' Some people in the street joined the chase, but Savarkar managed to reach a gendarme all the same. He grabbed hold of him and told him in broken French to take him to a magistrate. The policeman, convinced by his appearance that he was some lascar trying to run away from his ship, handed him back to the ship's officers instead.

Coils of the Raj

THE BID to escape at Marseille was the last bit of drama in Savarkar's life. After that he was caught up in the coils of the law of the Raj. He had believed that, for his revolutionary activities in London, the maximum sentence that any court could give him was seven years' imprisonment. He was given fifty years and sent to serve them in the cellular jail in the Andaman Islands to which his brother Babarao had already preceded him.

He nearly died in the Andamans. Ten years later, his health shattered and close to a mental breakdown, he was brought back from the penal colony and put into an Indian jail. After another four years, he was released on parole and confined to the district of Ratnagiri. He had already served fourteen years in various prisons, a period of the time which, in India, constitutes a normal 'life' sentence.

Savarkar never made any apologies for adopting the method of the anarchists in Europe to fight India's battle against the Raj. In an article he contributed to *Talwar* he asserted:

We hold that whenever the open preaching and practising of truth is banned by enthroned violence, then alone are secret societies and warfare justified. . .whenever the natural process of national and political evolution is violently suppressed by the forces of wrong, revolution must step in.

Such was the man Nathuram Godse met in Ratnagiri in the summer of 1929. Savarkar was forty-six years old, a soft, bald man with the face of a family priest. In the five years he had been out of jail, he had regained his full bodily and mental vigour. He was working to bring about social and religious reforms among the Hindus; he read voraciously and wrote innocuous articles and plays and novels which were required to bear a publisher's declaration that they were wholly divorced from politics. But the torrent of energy was far from fully engaged, nor had it found its natural outlet, politics.

Nathuram came under Savarkar's spell. Savarkar had been forbidden political activities but he could not be prevented from talking about politics in private conversation to anyone who was willing to listen.

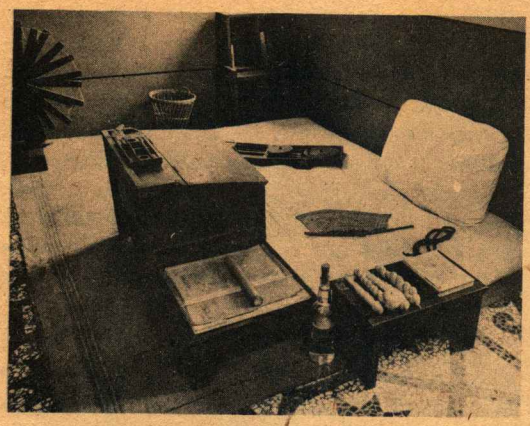
Nathuram sat and listened and was thrilled when, a few months later, Savarkar asked him to serve as his secretary. In this capacity, he learned to write English well, to assemble his thoughts and to deliver speeches. By the spring of 1931, when Nathuram's father retired from service and the family had to leave Ratnagiri, Nathuram had become a disciple of Savarkar.

Nathuram's father settled down in Sangli because he believed that 'living would be cheap in a small town'. To supplement the family's income, Nathuram took lessons in cutting and sewing and set himself up as a tailor. Later he added a fruit stall to his tailoring business.

At this time, some leading Hindus in Nagpur started a movement called Hindu Sanghatan. Its object was to unite the Hindus to guard their political interests which, they felt, were being eroded by Muslim intransigence on the one hand and, on the other, the excessive meekness of Congress leaders like Gandhi and Nehru who were anxious to placate the Muslims at all cost. It called upon the Hindus to give up non-violence as a creed because it was emasculating them, and to learn to stand up and fight for their rights.

Hindu Sanghatan, of course, was a stepchild of Savarkar's own revolutionary movement against the Raj and, in his talks with Savarkar in Ratnagiri, Nathuram had discovered that it had the Master's full support. So when, a year later, a branch of Hindu Sanghatan was opened in Sangli, Nathuram eagerly volunteered to work for it. He was appointed its secretary.

Nathuram was now in his early twenties and earning a modest living, and his parents thought he should get married and settle down. He told them that he had no intention of marrying, ever. It was a resolve he stuck to, and it, too, was all of a piece with his Spartan life-style. He neither smoked nor drank, wore the simplest clothes, read a lot of books in politics, history and Hindu religion, and worked hard.



Savarkar's release

IN 1937, when the British were trying out a new Constitution for India, the first elected government was formed in what was then known as the Bombay Presidency. One of the first acts of this government was to release Savarkar unconditionally; to them he was no seditionist but a freedom fighter, even if of a different brand from themselves.

Savarkar's trip from Ratnagiri to Bombay was a triumphal lecture tour of all the major towns along the route, of which Sangli was one. Here Nathuram rejoined Savarkar staff and then went along with him on his tour. What he saw convinced him that Sangli was too small a place for his field of activities. He shifted to Poona and set up his tailoring shop there; but here, too, his time was taken up in the work of Hindu Sanghatan, which now, with Savarkar's return to the political arena, was fast gathering momentum, strength and, even more, direction. The British officials were no longer the villains; the real enemies were the Muslims, who seemed bent on carving out a piece of India for themselves and by extension the weak-kneed leaders of the Indian National Congress who looked as though they were going to give in to this demand.

Under Savarkar's leadership, the Sanghatan movement blossomed as a political party, the Hindu Mahasabha, whose declared aim was to keep India whole and a Hindu land; but, it is only fair to explain, not a *purely* Hindu land. As Savarkar, who was now acclaimed by his adherents as 'Veer' or 'The Warrior', explained, the Mahasabha wanted that

> India should be essentially a secular state in which (all citizens) should have equal rights and duties irrespective of religion, caste or creed. (But we) refuse to tolerate that Hindus should be robbed to enable the Muslims to get more than their due simply because they were Muslims and would not otherwise behave as loyal citizens.

In 1938 the Mahasabha decided to carry out a protest march into the princely state of Hyderabad where the Hindu citizens were being discriminated against, and Nathuram Godse was given the leadership of the first batch of protest marchers. He was arrested and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. By the time he came out, the Second World War had begun, and the political scene in India had suffered a startling transformation.

During the First World War, Gandhi had vigorously championed Britain's cause and had recruited troops in India to fight for it, and the British had rewarded these services by granting him the Kaiser-i-Hind medal. Since then, Gandhi had become the foremost leader of India's struggle for freedom from Britain, and when Hitler's war had begun he had called upon his followers to boycott the war effort. A little later, he had followed this up with a nationwide campaign of non-co-operation.

And Nehru, who at the outset of the war had declared that India 'should offer unconditional co-operation to the British', shifted his stance and aligned himself with Gandhi's campaign, which sought to strangulate the Indian Government's war effort. For this, Gandhi and Nehru and other Congress leaders had been rounded up and given stiff jail terms.

Savarkar, who during the First World War had been a prisoner in the Andaman jail and had longed for a German victory, had now given a call to his followers to offer their fullest co-operation to the British war effort and to join the armed forces in large numbers. His motive was openly stated. He wanted the Hindus to learn to be proficient in the use of arms so that they would be able to hold their own in the battles that they were sure to be called upon to fight in the near future.

Here was Britain, which had inflicted inhuman punishment upon Indians for possessing arms and trying to learn how to use them, offering to train them in the use of the latest weapons of war. It would be foolish not to take the fullest advantage of such an opportunity. Savarkar was looking into the future, beyond the Second World War, to a time when the British would have gone and left the country to

the Hindus and Muslims and when the Hindus would be called upon to fend for themselves.

The Raj did not care why Savarkar was being helpful so long as he was being helpful; if he was no friend of the British, for the moment he was not an enemy, either. They allowed him to remain free but, as will presently appear, kept him under surveillance. It was the Congress leaders, who now tended to look upon him as a renegade, if not an enemy; the man who was helping the British at a time when the Congress had called upon them to quit India. Outspoken as always, Savarkar made many powerful enemies among the leading Congressmen, and was to pay dearly for these indiscretions.

Savarkar concentrated on building up his party, the Hindu Mahasabha, into a national organisation to compete with the Congress and the Muslim League. It made some limited progress all over India, but developed rapidly in the parts of India where the Marathi language was spoken, and the cities of Poona and Nagpur became its principal centres.

After his release from the jail in Hyderabad, Nathuram Godse had returned to Poona and resumed work in the Party's office. Here in 1941 he was visited by a dynamic young man who had been active in the Party's work in Ahmednagar, a cantonment town only seventy miles from Poona. His name was Narayan Dattatray Apte. Over the next two years, Nathuram and Apte became close friends.

The two friends

At thirty-one, Nathuram Godse was a quiet man of simple, almost austere tastes and a serious of mind. Pledged to celibacy he shied away from the company of women and deliberately shunned the temptations of life. He was bothered by even small lapses of middle-class morality and strove to keep his thoughts on a high plane. His favourite reading was books on religion and philosophy, his secret pride his ability to sway crowds with his speeches, and his admitted weakness a liking for coffee.

Narayan Apte was altogether different. He was quick-witted, lively and intelligent, well-educated, and with a family background of pure scholarship. He smoked and drank, and was fond of the good things of life. Though he came from the same sort of middle-class Brahmin background as Nathuram, he scoffed at the scruples and prohibitions of both his class and caste. He was good-looking in a somewhat effeminate way, and was vain about his prowess with women.

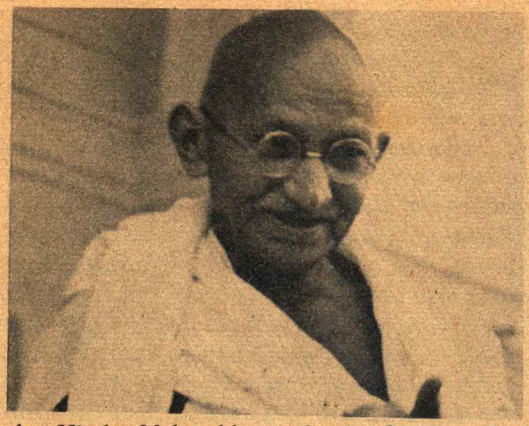
One can imagine Narayan Apte as the sort of man who might some day commit adultery (which he did) but not as a murderer; and Nathuram is difficult to imagine as one who would even think of re-using a postage stamp that had remained unfranked. That two men who were so different should become the closest of friends seems almost unnatural, but people who knew them well assert that neither was a homosexual and that the friendship was due entirely to a total identity of views on the Sanghatan movement.

Narayan Apte was born in 1911, and was thus a year younger than Nathuram. His family lived in Poona, and his father was a well-known historian and Sanskrit scholar. Narayan, the eldest male child among three sisters and four brothers, was educated in Poona. In 1932 he graduated from Bombay University as a Bachelor of Science. In those days of depression, jobs were not easy to come by and he had to mark time for three years before finding an opening as a teacher in the American Mission High School in Ahmednagar, run by a Miss Bruce.

But before the job came marriage, to a girl named Champa from the Fadtare family of Poona. The marriage, arranged by Narayan's parents, is described as being one of convenience, for the Fadtares were an old and influential family and relatively affluent. It was considered a good match for a jobless youth even if the youth himself may never have given his approval to it or even been consulted beforehand.

Narayan worked hard at his job, and soon became popular with his colleagues and students alike. In 1938, he thought of opening a rifle club in Ahmednagar 'with the object of training young men in the use of firearms', and the Congress Government which had come into office in Bombay gave him leave to do so. The 'firearms' were in fact air rifles with slugs, but even these in Indian hands were looked upon with suspicion in the days of the Raj, and clubs formed to train young men to use them regarded as positively dangerous. Apte's club became popular and the idea caught on. Within a year, Poona and half a dozen other towns had own rifle clubs.

In 1939, Apte joined the local branch of



the Hindu Mahasabha and met for the first time another man who was to be drawn into the conspiracy to murder Gandhi, Vishnu Karkare, a spry little Brahmin with wavy black hair and sharp piercing eyes who, with very little outside help, had established the branch of the Mahasabha in Ahmednagar, and had by now become its leading light. But initially Apte and Karkare were cool towards one another. To Karkare, Apte's job in a Christian school was reason enough to suspect his credentials as a good Hindu, and Apte for his part must have tended to look down on Karkare who, for all his importance in the Party's office, was a man with no family background and almost illiterate. It was Nathuram who later brought the two together.

At this time Apte was not keen on party work. He was actually thinking of settling down and making a career of teaching, and had gone to special trouble to improve his qualifications for it by passing the BT (Bachelor of Teaching) examination. His wife Champa had borne him a son whom he adored. He had given the son a conventional Hindu name but called Pappan, which is merely a term of endearment.

It took him almost two years to discover that his son was mentally retarded. People who knew him then say that he was shattered by the discovery. He wanted to leave Ahmednagar and all its memories and give up the teaching profession.

Secret society

IN THE spring of 1942, most of the Congress leaders were behind bars and Savarkar's party, the Hindu Mahasabha, was making excellent progress. Savarkar now thought of setting up a secret organization for doing work 'that could not be openly undertaken by a political party'. This organization, which was given the name of Hindu Rashtra Dal and which later gained notoriety as merely the 'Dal' was set up in May 1942, and both Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte were selected to be its office-bearers. Both subsequently held training camps in their respective areas.

According to the report of the CID (Criminal Investigation Department) informers who had wormed their way into the Dal, the camps 'trained volunteers in Indian games, physical exercises, shooting practice with air-guns, and also classes in Savarkar ideology'. But, even according to these informers, the total membership of the Dal 'never exceeded 150'.

Meanwhile, Apte, who was still keen to get away from Ahmednagar, had applied for a job as a recruiting officer. He was taken on in early 1943, and appointed an assistant technical recruiting officer for the Royal (as it then was) Indian Air Force. He was gazetted a flight-lieutenant and posted to Poona. The job was temporary and meant to last only for the duration of the war, but he was now entitled to wear the insignia and uniform of an officer holding the King's commission, and to all the rights and privileges that went with it.

At last Apte could turn his back on Ahmednagar and the teaching profession.

It was from all accounts, a touching farewell, for he had been an extraordinarily popular teacher. The High School was co-educational institution, and many of the senior girls who came to see him in a batch actually had tears in their eyes. Apte made a suitably humorous speech and told them to stop being silly. It was not as though he was being posted to some distant theatre of war, but only to Poona. For a few of them he scribbled the address of his Poona office in case they felt like writing to him some day to let him know how they were faring.

One of these girls was Manorama Salvi, then aged seventeen. She belonged to an Indian Christian family, and was brought up in the rigidly orthodox manner typical of such families, to the daily singing of hymns and in an atmosphere crackling with missionary piousness. She was studious and moody and painfully shy. She was dark and plain. She carefully made a note of Apte's address and, more than a year later, while she was a student in a Bombay college, wrote to him. They met several times

after that and eventually became lovers.

In Poona, the Air Force was sufficiently impressed by Apte's performance as a recruiting officer to offer him a permanent commission, which he eagerly accepted. To be an officer of the Royal Indian Air Force was to be launched on a sound, respectable and fairly lucrative career with a guaranteed pension at the end of it. But within a few months Apte resigned his permanent commission, preferring to go on working as a wartime officer. The reason he gave for doing so was good enough to satisfy the Air Force authorities. It was that his father had died a few months earlier and that, as his eldest son, all the responsibilities of the head of the family, or karta, of looking after his widowed mother and several brothers and sisters had become solely his. This was, of course, quite true.

But there was a far more compelling reason which made it out of the question for Apte to remain in a service in which he was liable to be transferred away from Poona. His wife Champa, who had become somewhat abstracted in her behaviour, seemed to live only for their son Pappan, who was showing increasing signs of a virulent form of insanity. Apte had been resisting pressure from friends and neighbours and the advice of doctors to have the boy committed to a mental asylum. Apart from the fact that he himself could not bear the thought of consigning his small son, so innocent and trusting, except during his fits, to the mercies of an institution, he knew that it would quite break his wife's heart.

It was the sort of problem that has no solution except through death. But at least by remaining on the spot, he could keep things from getting worse, and the thought of what might happen to his family if he was posted away to some remote place was too horrifying to think about.

That was why Apte had to reject his permanent commission in the Air Force, but there was no reason why he should not go on working as a recruiting officer so long as they kept him in Poona.

Party ideals

ONCE the major decision was made and the prospect of an Air Force career thrown away, Apte had to think of something else to do after the war. Even as it was, recruiting had all but stopped and he had plenty of spare time on his hands. So, when his friend Nathuram asked him if he would like to join a venture that he was about to start to propagate the Party's ideals, he jumped at the offer.

Nathuram was starting a newspaper, and 'Veer' Savarkar had made him a loan of Rs.15,000 to do it.

The Marathi daily *Agrani* (which means 'The Forerunner') began publication on the day of the Hindu New Year, which that year (1944) fell on 28 March. On its front page it bore a picture of Savarkar and a Sanskrit motto: 'Public good, not mere popularity.' Nathuram Godse was its Editor. Narayan Apte, who still wore uniform, was its manager.

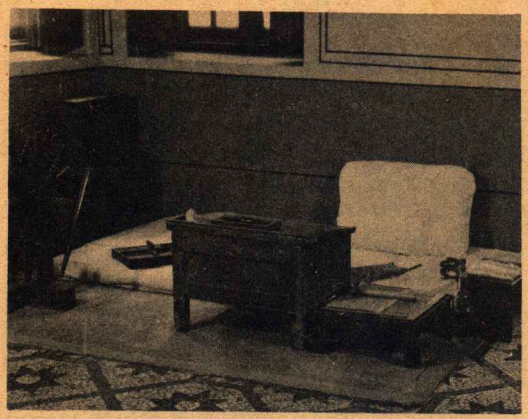
Right from start, the paper ran into difficulties: wartime shortages, control on newsprint, censorship, CID surveillance and, above all, a desperate lack of money. But the Editor and the Manager worked hard in a spirit of dedication. The difficulties only brought them closer; they cheerfully shared one another's work, and borrowed from friends and moneylenders to keep the paper going.

Initially, there was not much difference between the sentiments of the Indian National Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha; both wanted Swaraj, or self-rule, and both wanted India to remain undivided. The only differenec was that the Congress was prepared to make considerable concessions to the Muslims to keep India undivided, and the Mahasabha was opposed to any such concessions. Gandhi for his part had repeated his cry, 'Vivisect me before you vivisect India', and Nehru and others, if less dramatic in the way they expressed it, were equally firm against partition.

Later, when it turned out that the Muslim League was altogether unappeasable, the Congress began to show signs of giving in to their demand for Pakistan, but Savarkar and his followers remained staunchly opposed to it till the very end, and so, to be fair, did a large number of people within the Congress organization itself.

Even as late March 1947, Gandhi had insisted: 'If Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I live, I will never agree to the partition of India.'

But these were like the words of a charm repeated again and again in the hope that they might work a miracle. For Gandhi had already



accepted the inevitability of partition a whole three years earlier, soon after he had been released from jail in 1944. In those days it was his habit to spend a few weeks every year in the hill resort of Panchgani, a bare fifty miles away from Poona. And here Narayan Apte had led a batch of his followers to confront him and denounce him for reneging on his promises.

Slogans and black flags

THE Times of India of 23 July 1944, under the headline 'MR GANDHI HECKLED', carried a report that a Poona journalist named N.D. Apte had led a demonstration of Hindu youths to express their resentment at Gandhi having given his blessings to the formula of partition. The Times went on to say that there were at least four armed police officials in mufti close Gandhi. As Apte and his party shouted slogans and waved black flags, and the small crowd of about four hundred people began to grow restive, the policemen swooped and hustled Apte to the local station for questioning.

Deputy Superintendent N.Y. Deulkar, a tall, athletic man with a fruity, unctuous voice and a persuasive manner, who was on duty in Panchgani at the time and who later played a crucial part in the investigation following Gandhi's murder, questioned Apte closely. These details assume an importance only because they prove that, at least from July 1944, Apte was well known to the police as a man who detested Gandhi. Subsequently too, both Godse and Apte were repeatedly pulled in by the authorities for some infringement of the Indian Press (Emergency) Act.

Despite this, and even though the police had at least a week's advance warning that the Editor of a Marathi journal called the *Hindu Rashtra*, as the *Agrani* was later renamed, was among those who had planned to kill Gandhi, they were unable to prevent the murder. The information got caught up in a tangle of procedure and in departmental rivalries and never filtered through to Deulkar who, at the time of Gandhi's murder, happened to be Deputy Superintendent of the CID in Poona itself, and lived within walking distance of the paper's office.

The *Agrani's* own reporting of the Panchgani incident was far more dramatic. It carried on its front page a photograph of Apte posed against one of Gandhi, and bearing the caption: 'I denounce you a hundred times because you have conceded Pakistan!'

What with this deep involvement in the politics of the Mahasabha, in addition to holding down his two jobs, Apte might be thought to have had his hands too full for anything else. But he was a man of extraordinary energy and had time for other pursuits as well. So when, on his return from Panchgani after heckling Gandhi, he received a letter from one of his erstwhile pupils, Manorama Salvi, to come and see her, he responded with alacrity.

'I wrote to Apte at Poona', Manorama was to testify before a Bombay magistrate, 'and a few days later he called at the hostel to see me and two other former students.'

The hostel was the Ramabai hostel for girls in Bombay, attached to the Wilson College. Apte, a dashing figure in his Air Force uniform, came in the middle of the afternoon, charmed the warden of the hostel, a Mrs. Hewat, who was known for her strictness towards her wards, with a snappy salute and a dazzling smile, and took all three girls out. They saw an afternoon movie and later walked on the sands in front of Wilson College. By 7.30 all three girls were back in their hostel.

When, a few days later, Apte called at the hostel again, he only asked for Manorama. This was the first of many such meetings, as a result of which she later admitted becoming 'very friendly with him'. They began to correspond, Apte writing his letters in a feminine handwriting and signing himself Nirmala, as though he was a girl, to ensure that they were not intercepted by the eagle-eyed Mrs. Hewat. By the end of the year, she had taken to spending nights with him in various seedy hotels. In the hotel registers, he boldly entered their names as Mr. and Mrs. Apte.

The incidents relating to Gandhi's murder are well-known. But few know that ten days before the murder, the same Godse and company had ludicrously failed to carry out the attempt. One of them, seeing a one-eyed man thought it a bad omen. They managed to burst only one bomb which drove Madanlal straight into the arms of the police and the rest to hide and weep over their farcical failure.

DRESS REHEARSAL

ON THE NIGHT of the nineteenth, Madanlal and Gopal slept in the room in the Hindu Mahasabha Bhavan, and Badge and Shankar in the entrance hall outside. Karkare spent the night with Apte and Nathuram in the Marina Hotel room.

The drizzle had continued throughout the night, but had abated towards the morning, and by 7.30 the sky had cleared. It had been arranged that they would meet in the Hindu Mahasabha Bhavan early the next morning. But, at about 8.30, only Apte and Karkare turned up. They explained that Nathuram was laid up with one of the severe attacks of migraine from which he periodically suffered, but that he had promised to join them later in the day. Apte then asked Badge and Shankar to go with him to Birla House so that he could show them on the spot exactly what he wanted them to do.

Even though Madanlal and Gopal, who had been assigned equally important roles in the murder plot, had never been to Birla House, they did not go with Apte even this time because they were waiting for water to be heated for their baths. Karkare, who had already familiarized himself with his working-ground, thought it a waste of time to go over it yet once more, and stayed on at the Mahasabha Bhavan.

Apte found a taxi and took Badge and Shankar to Birla House. After hanging about in front of the main gate for a few minutes Apte led them to the servants' quarters at the back of the house, and they made their way into the grounds through the service entrance. Part of the garden at Birla House was what was termed 'sunkun', and the wide lawn that led from the main house to a small summerhouse was on two levels. Apte pointed out to Badge the place where Gandhi sat during the prayer meeting, which was on the raised portion of the lawn, and explained how this spot was 'within four or five paces' of the rear window of one of the servants' room at the back.

This room, No. 3, was occupied by one of the Birla family's chauffeurs, Chotu Ram, and the window in it was actually a decorative ventilation-grille in the wall formed by leaving out bits of masonry. An excellent description of this grille is given in the testimony of Sardar Jaswant Singh, Deputy Superintendent of the Delhi Police, who actually 'measured the dimensions of the trellis work'.

> 'It is not a straight trellis work. . .the various openings are not of the same size and shape. . . none of the openings is rectangular in shape. . . the size of the biggest holes is 6" x 3". There are eight such holes. There are in all 26 holes in the trellis work.'

Apte sauntered close to this grille and, according to Badge, 'took measurements of the opening with a piece of string'.

Apte himself had never thrown a grenade in his life. Indeed, he still believed that the only way to extract the pin holding the striker in position was to pull it out with one's teeth. It is also doubtful whether he had ever actually fired a revolver. All the same, he now pronounced that through a hole in the grille 'a revolver could be fired and also a hand grenade could be thrown'.

After that he guided the other two back to the servants' quarters and pointed out the room with the grille which they had seen from the other side. He told Badge that all he had to do was to enter the room on the pretext of wanting to take a photograph, shoot Gandhi through the grille and follow this up by shoving

a grenade through the hole and into the congregation.

Neither Apte nor Badge had entered the room itself, but both seemed satisfied that it would serve their purpose. And as to Shankar, since Apte had been explaining things to Badge in an undertone and in Marathi, which Shankar hardly understood, he still had no idea why he had been taken on a tour of the Birla House garden or what he was required to do later in the day. Apte, now feeling no doubt that he had given his men a commando-type dry run of a daringly conceived raid, took them back to the Mahasabha Bhavan for the next step in the indoctrination of his team.

When they got there, it was already past eleven, and only Gopal was in the room, bathed and ready; the other two, Karkare and Madanlal, had gone to lunch. But Apte decided to put his team through another practice exercise even though three of its seven members were absent. 'We're going into the wood at the back to try out the two revolvers,' he told the others.

WHAT happened at this firing practice bordered on farce, though the actors themselves were so desperately serious about their roles. As Badge recalls it, 'On reaching the jungle, Apte asked Gopal to take out his revolver. It was taken out and, on pressing the catch, it was found that the revolver chamber did not come out.'

The .38 Webley Scott which Gopal had brought back to India had lain buried in the ground for nearly four years and had become encrusted with mud and rust.

Apte thereupon asked Badge for his revolver; and Badge, who never carried anything incriminating on himself if he could get Shankar to do it, in turn ordered Shankar to produce it. Apte then loaded the revolver with the four cartridges that Sharma had given with it and, handing it back to Shankar, asked him to fire it at a tree. Shankar said that he would not be able to fire a shot, but Apte told him to 'just press the trigger'. Then 'Shankar fired a shot. The bullet did not reach the tree but fell down in between.'

Badge's revolver was a .32 and in perfect order. The trouble was that the ammunition that Sharma had supplied was either of the wrong calibre or defective.

Apte cursed and pronounced the smaller revolver to be 'a useless weapon'. Everything now depended on Gopal's revolver being repaired in time. Gopal, who remembered that he had a bottle of coconut hair-oil and a penknife in his room at the Bhavan, sent Shankar to fetch them, as well as a blanket to sit on so that the cleaned parts should not collect more dirt. Shankar ran all the way there and back. They spread the blanket under a tree and Gopal began to scrape off the rust from the mechanism of his revolver while the others watched anxiously.

But soon there was a moment of sheer panic. They heard voices and had just pushed the two revolvers under the blanket when they saw uniformed men approaching. The ruse they thought of to account for their presence in the forest was characteristic. Badge was made to lie down on the blanket as though in pain and Shankar (Even though the ballistics experts I have talked to seem sceptical that a bullet could act in such a peculiar manner, two men who were present at this target practice, Gopal and Badge, have told me that this is what actually happened.) rubbed the oil from the bottle on his ankle. Only when the men came close did they realize that they must be forest guards on their rounds. One of the guards demanded to know what they were doing; and Gopal, who had learned to speak Punjabi well during his time with the Army, told them that they had come out for a quiet walk and were resting for a few minutes because one of them had twisted his ankle. The guards appeared satisfied with this explanation and went on their way, but the panic had been too much for Apte. He told them that it was no use trying to repair the revolver in the open and they should go back and do it indoors. Thereupon all four went back to the room in the Bhavan, and found that Karkare and Madanlal had returned.

It was already noon, with zero hour barely

five hours away. Apte bundled his men and their hand luggage into two taxis and took them to the Marina. He then told Badge and Shankar to go down to the restaurant and eat their lunch and, while they were away, carried out an experiment to discover how long the blasting fuse they had brought with them took to burn. They shut the door and ignited a length of the fuse. According to Karkare,

> There was a blinding flash and a hissing sound. When we opened our eyes, the room was thick with black smoke which made us cough. We picked up a mattress from one of the beds and stamped out the still smouldering bits and pieces. A hotel servant had come rushing to the door ro find out what was happening, but Apte managed to fob him off with a story about a mattress having caught fire while he was lighting a cigarette.

When, after their leisurely lunch, Badge and Shankar returned to the room upstairs, they found everyone in a jubilant mood. Gopal had succeeded in repairing his revolver. At least, he had managed to put its moving parts in working order. Whether it would actually fire could not be tested since it was now too late for more target practice.

They locked themselves in and during the next half-hour carefully primed the hand grenades and fitted firing charges and fuses into the gun-cotton slabs. After that, they sat down to a council of war.

Their armoury now consisted of Gopal's .38 revolver, which they hoped had become serviceable; Badge's .32 revolver, which they knew to be useless five 36 hand grenades fitted with seven-second fuses; and two one-pound slabs of gun-cotton with ninety-second fuses. They had, or at least Madanlal had, handled explosives before, but none of them had fired a revolver or thrown a 36 grenade, and they had very little idea of the capabilities or limitations of either weapon. For instance, Badge (according to an altered plan) confidently hoped to shoot Gandhi with his revolver at a range of some thirty feet, when, at that sort of distance, it would take a practised shot to make certain of hitting a man. And, as to the hand grenades, their idea was to get close to Gandhi and hurl them into the crowd at random from all sides, little realizing that they risked committing harakiri along with their gruesome mass murder.

'Last effort'

NATHURAM, a little trembly after a bout of migraine, opened the proceedings with an exhortation that all of them must work with the absolute conviction of the rightness of their cause and the fullest faith in victory, since 'this was their last effort'. Apte then took over and got down to practicalities. The first thing to do, he told them, was to 'create a commotion', and then finish off Gandhi and whoever happened to be in his vicinity with revolver shots and grenades. The commotion was to be created by exploding their two charges of gun-cotton. Madanlal would set off one. Who would fire the other one?

He was met with a stony silence. The fact was that none of the others had ever set off a charge of explosive and had no idea how to do it. Badge, despite the fact that he ran a business selling explosives and firearms, was later to confess, 'I had taken no lessons as to how to use hand grenades, gun-cotton slabs, revolver, pistols, etc. . . .I have myself thrown no hand grenades or exploded gun-cotton slabs.'

'Why not', Badge now suggested to Apte, 'do with just one blast? We don't really need two.'

And so it was decided. Only one of the gun-cotton slabs would be exploded by Madanlal, who, after lighting the ninety-second fuse, would go and join the others around Gandhi, ready to throw a grenade at him.

When the report of the blast was heard, Badge would fire Gopal's service revolver at Gandhi through the ventilation-grille that he had been shown in the morning and Shankar, who would have managed to worm his way close to Gandhi, would, at point-blank range, pump into him the remaining three bullets in the chamber of Badge's .32. Immediately after emptying his revolver, Badge would push a hand grenade through the ventilation-grille with the barrel of his revolver. The revolver shots would be the signal for the other grenade throwers to hurl their grenades in the general direction of Gandhi. For this purpose, the five grenades that they had brought with them would be distributed one each to Badge, Shankar, Karkare, Madanlal and Gopal. Neither Apte himself nor Nathuram would carry any arms, but it would be their business to guide the operation by 'giving signal'.

Any questions?

There were no questions. The plan was perfect. Nothing could conceivably go wrong. The gun-cotton charge would explode and create panic; Badge would be able to make his way into the room that overlooked Gandhi's seat; Gopal's revolver would go off; the bullets of the smaller revolver which had performed so miserably earlier in the morning would miraculously achieve velocity. All of them would then hurl hand-grenades from all sides like boys throwing stones into a pool and, after it was all over, walk away from the scene of carnage undetected and unhurt. They would saunter back to their respective rooms and lie low for a day or two and then catch their trains and planes back to wherever they were headed for. And it would not be long before the nation recognized them for what they were—heroes and public benefactors, true patriots who had rid their motherland of the evil genius who had assisted in her ravishment.

If Apte knew that Shankar had not understood most of what he had been told, or indeed that he did not even know what Gandhi looked like, he was not worried. Shankar was merely an appendage of Badge's, and it was Badge's business to explain things to him. And Badge's method of explaining the plan was to tell him 'to throw his hand grenade at the person at whom I threw mine; that he was to fire his revolver at the person at whom I fired mine—an old man called Gandhiji who was to be 'finished'.

There was nothing more to discuss. If it occurred to the others that the two leaders had given themselves no active roles, and that they would not even be carrying a weapon, it could not have seemed odd to them.

They still had a whole hour to while away before setting out on their mission; they spent the hour in tacking small refinements onto their flawless plan.

And this again plummeted into farce. It was as though the approach of zero hour had not only dispelled their tension, but had also retarded their mental capacities.

Apte decreed they should all adopt false names for the occasion. So Nathuram became 'Deshpande'; Apte 'Karmarkar'; Karkare 'Bias' or ('Vyas'); Badge 'Bandopant'; and Shankar 'Tukaram'. No one now remembers what names Gopal and Madanlal were given; no one considered that it would be impossible in the confusion of the moment for all seven of them to remember everyone else's false name.

Karkare then made the suggestion that they should all assume disguises, and everyone agreed that it was an excellent idea. They rigged themselves out with one another's clothes, everyone trying to put on something that he did not normally wear. Badge discarded his saffron robes and wore a white knee-length 'Nehru' shirt and white dhoti and a towel draped over his shoulders like a scarf. Nathuram put on khaki shorts and a shirt as though he were a policeman, Apte a dark suit with a black scarf; Madanlal wore the jacket of Apte's Air Force blue suit; and Karkare 'painted' false moustaches, darkened his eyebrows, and made a red mark on his forehead'.

And thus, made up like a troupe of village fun-men, they set out to murder the Mahatma.

They were hypnotized by their own thoughts. They would kill Gandhi (to say nothing of the dozens of others who happened to be in his vicinity) and still go on as though nothing had happened. So sure were they that they would not even be suspected of the deed that they had made no preparations whatsoever to leave Delhi in a hurry in case anything went wrong. That very morning, both Nathuram and Apte had given clothes to be washed by the hotel dhobi (washerman) which they confidently expected to collect on the twenty-second.

The passengers

SURJIT Singh, an unlettered young Sikh who had fled from Pakistan, had managed by some miracle to bring out his car with him. He now made a living in New Delhi by running the car as a 'private' taxi (which meant that he did not have a licence to run it as a taxi). He was proud of the fact that his car was of a distinctive yellow-green colour which he called

moongia (the colour of gram) and that it was perhaps the only 'taxi' in Delhi, private or licensed, which had a luggage-carrier fitted on its top. On the afternoon of 20 January, Surjit was waiting for a fare near the Regal Cinema when four people came up and, since the taxi had no meter, settled the fare in advance for taking them to Birla House, waiting there for half an hour, and bringing them back.

His four passengers were Apte, Gopal, Badge and Shankar. Apte directed Surjit to take his car to the back of Birla House, and they all got out near the servants' quarters. Surjit saw them go through the gate and into the garden. He waited near his car for a few minutes, and then thought he would go and attend Gandhi's prayer meeting; so he too went through the gate.

Nathuram, Madanlal and Karkare and preceded the others to Birla House. All three now came up and reported that everything was going according to plan. Madanlal had placed the explosive charge in position and would set it off as soon as Apte gave him the signal, and Karkare had arranged that the occupant of the room with the ventilator-grille should let Badge go in and take a photograph.

Nathuram and Apte walked with Badge towards the room and, as they approached it, Badge saw 'a one-eyed man sitting on a cot near its door'.

This was a bad omen. To see a one-eyed man at the start of any venture was to invite certain failure. Badge turned and told Apte that nothing would make him go into the room now.

Badge was paralysed with fear. He had convinced himself that the room was like a trap; that, if he once passed the one-eyed man at the door and entered the room, he would never come out of it alive. He begged his two companions to 'let him strike Gandhi from the front', and in the open meeting. Nathuram and Apte kept telling him that there was nothing to fear, that their plans of escape were foolproof. But nothing would make Badge change his mind. Meanwhile time was running out. Gandhi had already arrived, and the hum of the opening prayers chanted by the dozen or so girls could be heard from where they were. The prayer meeting seldom lasted for more than twenty-five minutes. It was the hour of sunset, and within half an hour it would be too dark to see properly.

There was nothing for it but to give in. Yes, Badge could shoot Gandhi in the open meeting.

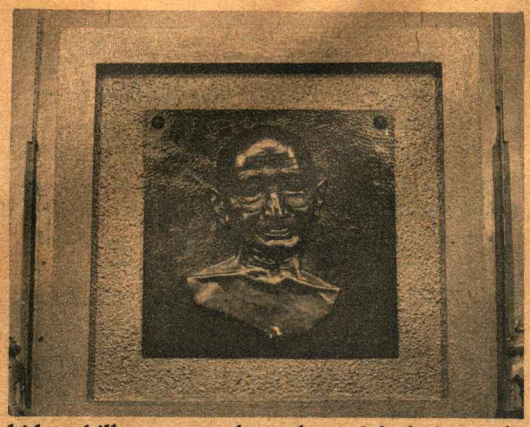
But Badge had already abandoned any thought of killing Gandhi. Just as he had agreed to join the plot of assassination as another man might agree to make a fourth at bridge, now, with the countdown about to begin, he was throwing in his hand. A mental process was reversing itself. A quirk of bravado had sparked it; a fit of panic had put out the fire. However, one should not suppose that the one-eyed man sitting in front of Chotu Ram's room No. 2 had given Gandhi an extra ten days of life. As will be seen, even if Badge had agreed to go through with the plan he would never have been able to fire his revolver from one of the openings in the room.

On the pretext of explaining the changed plan to Shankar, Badge took him back to the waiting taxi while the other conspirators strolled nervously in the garden. By coincidence the taxi-driver wasn't there, and Badge had plenty of time to roll up his own and Shankar's revolvers in the towel which he had draped around his shoulders. He placed the bundle on the rear seat of the taxi. After that he gave his hand grenade to Shankar to keep and warned him that he was not to 'do anything with it' till he, Badge, gave him the word. Then, balling both his fists and thrusting them deep inside the pockets of his Nehru shirt so as to create the impression that he was carrying both the revolver and hand-grenade in them, he and Shankar went back to rejoin the others.

Despite the fact that he was now unarmed, Badge went up to Apte, who asked him if he was ready. Badge said later: 'I told him I was ready and started walking towards the prayer ground. I saw Apte placing a hand on Madanlal's shoulder and heard him say, ('Chalo' 'OK' or 'Go ahead'.).

Thus was Madanlal sacrificed.

But thus, too, was prevented the mass slaughter of innocent bystanders; the simple-minded men and women who came to the prayer meetings as they would go to a temple, intent on getting the Mahatma's darshan (sight) and nothing else. That day the crowd was small, perhaps no more than 200 people in all; but there can be no doubt that at least half of them would have found themselves caught in the killing ground of one or the other of the five hand grenades that were to be thrown in their midst. That Apte and Nathuram should have thought that his slaughter was justified in their



bid to kill one man shows how sick their minds were. Their victims would have been mainly Hindus, and thus their act would have been every bit as callous as the worst of the Muslim atrocities they were seeking to avenge.

Nearly a hundred yards from the Birla House servants' quarters, were the servants' quarters of No. 9 Albuquerque Road, and in one of these lived Nanak Chand and his young wife Sulochana. Their three-year-old son, Mohinder, was always straying away to play with the children of the Birla servants. On the evening of 20 January, when Sulochana had gone to the back of Birla House to look for her son, she saw 'a person placing a bomb and then lighting a match-stick. I forcibly picked up my child. . .saw sparks coming out of the string or the thing attached to the bomb.'

Madanlal, too, saw Sulochana. In fact, he told her to pick up her child and run. Then he hurried off to the meeting to tell Apte.

'I told Apte that the gun-cotton would explode any moment. Apte assured me that everyting was under control.'

Apte could see both his front-line soldiers, Badge and Shankar, who had managed to take positions on both sides of Gandhi, and they were so obviously ready to empty their revolvers into him the moment the 'bomb' went off. Then the second line would go into action; Karkare, Madanlal and Gopal, as well as Badge and Shankar, would hurl their grenades at Gandhi and those around him.

The explosion was heard. Everyone in the crowd heard it. No one fired a shot; no one hurled a grenade. Madanlal, who happened to be looking at Shankar, saw him 'take to his heels', and then saw that Badge, too, was running. At that time, Apte tapped him on the shoulder and whispered that the plan had miscarried.

Madanlal had never been to Birla House before, and had no idea of where to go. He took off in the direction of what he thought would be an exit and found himself in the imposing porch of Birla House. He whirled about and dashed through the bushes and across a drive and found himself approaching the main entrance to the building and a group of agitated-looking policemen. The one thing he could not now afford to submit to was a search of his person, for he still had the grenade in his pocket. He doubled back and managed to find the servants' gate through which he had come, and this brought him close to the place where he had placed the explosive charge. The woman with her child was still there, saying something to a policeman with a rifle and two other men. She turned to Madanlal and pointed a finger. 'That's the man!' she screamed.

The blast

SURJIT Singh, the taxi-driver, had never seen Gandhi before. Today he saw him being carried to the meeting in a chair. This was Gandhi's first public appearance after his fast had ended, and he was still too weak to walk. From his place in the outer circle of the crowd, Surjit heard the chanting of the verses from the Gita, and then Gandhi addressed the meeting. But all Surjit heard was an indistinct murmur. It was nearly twenty minutes before someone told him that the microphone had broken down. Disappointed, he sauntered back to where he had left his car. He heard an explosion, but is not certain whether it occurred while he was still at the meeting or after he had returned to his taxi. From what Gopal Godse states, Surjit must have returned to his taxi a couple of minutes after the bomb had exploded.

'The explosion was loud enough to be heard at a far-off distance,' writes Tendulkar, Gandhi's biographer, but 'Gandhi remained unruffled'. He went on his address as though nothing had happened, and soon the restive crowd settled down. The prayer meeting went through its prescribed routine of opening chorus, speech, recitations from the Koran, the Bible and the Gita, and finally the Ramdhun with its bi-religious invocation to Ishwar (Hindu) and Allah (Muslim) to 'give wisdom to all'.

The Mahatma's own reaction to the incident was utterly true to character. In talking about it later in the evening, he was, if anything, full of

praise for Madanlal. 'The boy is a bahadur (brave warrior),' he declared, and compared him to Bhagat Singh, the leader of a terrorist gang whom the British had executed and who had become something of a national hero. Gandhi went on: 'Bachhe hain, Abhi yeh samajhte nahin. Maroonga to yaad karenge, ke boodha theek kehta tha.' (They're like children. They don't understand. After I'm gone they'll realize that what the old man used to say was right.)

When Gopal Godse saw Shankar and Badge running away, his first instinct was to bolt. But, as he got to the waiting taxi, saw the white bundle on the rear seat, realized what it was, and discovered that the driver was absent, the thought suddenly struck him that this was his one chance of finishing the job on his own. He grabbed the bundle, thrust it into the cloth bag in which he was carrying the grenade and dashed in the direction of the servants' quarters. Since everyone was running about at this time, no one took any notice of him. All the servants' quarters were suddenly empty and their doors wide open. He boldly walked into Chotu Ram's room, shut the door behind him and fastened it with the chain with which it was meant to be secured from inside, and took out the .38 revolver.

A glance at the grille made him realize that it was set too high in the wall to provide a view of the prayer ground. He jumped and managed to grab hold of a ledge and heaved himself up. But he needed both his hands to keep in this position. For a few seconds he struggled frantically to hold himself up with one hand and use the other to grip the revolver. It was impossible. He let go, ran back to the door and tried to release the chain. He broke into a cold sweat when he realized that he couldn't pull it out. For a few seconds he struggled desperately, terrified that he had locked himself in. Then he put down the bag he was carrying and, applying both hands, pressed the chain off its hook. The door opened with a startling bang. He ran out and made for the waiting taxi. Nathuram, Apte and Karkare had already come there, and so had their taxi-driver. They piled into the car and, according to the driver, told him urgently to 'start the car—start the car!' He drove them back to Connaught Place.

Almost unbelievably, the floor of Chotu Ram's room was at a lower level than the ground at the back from where, it will be recalled, Apte had measured the openings in the grille without much difficulty. In fact, from inside the room the height of the grille was a little more than seven feet. And, if Gopal could not fire a revolver through one of the holes, there was no question of Badge being able to do so, either. Gopal is not tall man—perhaps five feet eight inches—but Badge is barely five feet.

In the car Karkare told them in Marathi how he had seen Madanlal being led by the police to the tent pitched outside the gate of Birla House, and how he had caught Madanlal's eye and signalled to him that his friends would stand by him.

After the taxi dropped them, they strolled across into the open field in front of the Regal Cinema, and stood under the trees. Their minds were numbed by the realization of failure, and the only thing they could talk about was their immediate plans. Karkare, who regarded Madanlal as his special responsibility, was anxious to stay on in Delhi for another day and see if he could do something to help him. Then he would make his way to Bombay and lie low. Gopal was keen to go back to Poona and resume duty, and decided to catch the Punjab Mail the next morning. Apte and Nathuram were leaving Delhi that night, but in some direction other than that of Bombay.

They shook hands as though to encourage one another and parted. The bundle which contained both the revolvers was still in Gopal's hands, and Gopal took it away with him. This was something they would soon come to regret.

Apte and Nathuram walked the short distance to the Marina and checked out, preferring not to make any inquiries about their laundry. Karkare and Gopal sat in a coffee shop for a few minutes and then took a tonga to the Hindu Mahasabha Bhavan. They found that Badge had already removed his things from their room and had gone. They, too, collected their belongings and went to Old Delhi, where close to the railway station they found a cheap hotel, the Frontier Hindu Hotel. Here they took a room for a day, Gopal giving his name as 'Rajagopalan' and Karkare as 'G.M. Joshi.'

Once outside Birla House, Badge hired a tonga, and he and Shankar went to Karkare's room in the Hindu Mahasabha Bhavan in which they had left their luggage. While he busied himself 'tying up his bedding', he sent Shankar off to bury the two cloth bags full of grenades and explosives which they still possessed somewhere in the woods at the back of the Bhavan.

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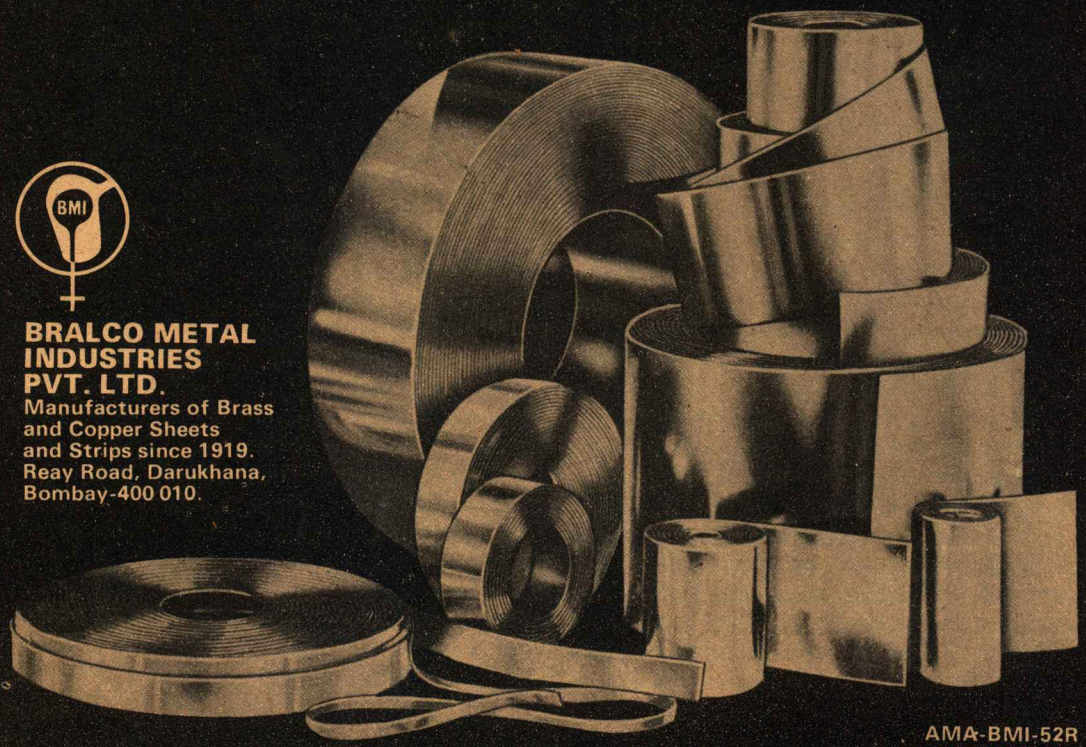

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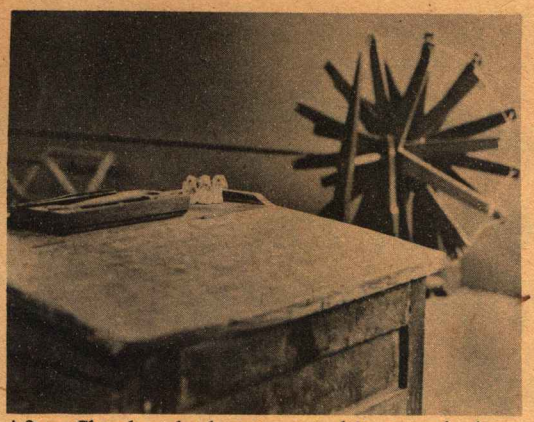

After Shankar had gone on this errand, Apte and Nathuram turned up in a taxi and demanded to know why Badge had not carried out his part of the operation. Badge thereupon 'abused them and asked them to get out. And they got out.'

As soon as Shankar came back Badge sent him to fetch a tonga, and in it they were driven to New Delhi railway station. But the station platform was bristling with policemen, so they drove on to the Old Delhi station. Here they did not see too many policemen, and a train for Bombay was ready to leave within half an hour. They got into a crowded compartment. Two days later they were back in Poona.

'No backing out'

BADGE did not know it then, but Apte and Nathuram also happened to be at the Old Delhi railway station at the time, but on a different platform. They were in a first-class compartment of the overnight train to Kanpur, which left only a few minutes after Badge's train. Since they were by themselves in the four-birth sleeping-compartment, they could talk to one another freely.

As Apte later recounted to Karkare:

> To be sure, we were greatly distressed by our failure, but we had by no means lost our determination, and there was no question of packing in—of going back to the routine of business and family life. I kept telling Nathuram:
>
> 'We can't turn back now; not at this stage. We'll have another try, recruit a new lot of men, collect more money. But we just can't drop the whole thing now.'

Nathuram didn't say much, but somehow I could sense that he was not altogether in agreement. It was not till the next morning that I discovered what he was thinking about. It must have been past midnight when I dozed off. I had a disturbed sleep and, at about six the next morning, I was only half-awake when I heard Nathuram say:

'Nana, did you sleep well?'

I numbled something and stretched my limbs and sleepily answered:

'Um-hum, and you?'

He did not answer my question. Instead he said:

'I'm going to do it. I don't need any help, not another man.

'No recruiting people, no depending on any one else.'

My eyes were still closed, and I swear that, in that instant, I saw Gandhi dead.

In Kanpur, Nathuram went into railway station office and, in his own name, booked a retiring-room with two beds. That day they spent on the station itself. At 11.30 the next morning they caught the Lucknow-Jhansi Mail, at Jhansi, gave them a connection with the Delhi-Bombay Punjab Mail. They reached Bombay's Victoria Terminus at noon on 23 January, and proceeded to a cheap mid-town hotel where Apte had stayed several times before with his mistress. It was the Arya Pathikashram on Sandhurst Road; and its Manager, Gaya Pershad Dube, regarded Apte, who always demanded and paid for 'a whole room to himself', as a favoured client. This time, however, Dube could not oblige Apte and his friend with a separate room; in fact, the best he could do was to give them two beds in a room that had six other lodgers, but promised to do something better for them the next morning.

Apte and Nathuram left their luggage in the hotel and hurried off to Thana, to the house of Mr. G.M. Joshi, where Karkare normally stayed whenever he was in Bombay. But Joshi had not seen anything of Karkare since he had left for Delhi, so they went to the two or three other people whom Karkare was known to visit. Considering that the new plan was to be a one-man effort, their anxiety to get in touch with Karkare seems strange, but they had been out of touch since Madanlal's arrest and did not even know whether any of the others was still free. Nor were they sure whether they were going to stay on in Bombay or proceed to Poona, and thus did not leave any instructions for Karkare at these houses as to how he was to contact them when he finally did come.

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Of the conspirators, only Godse admitted killing Gandhi. The others–Apte, Karkare, Pahva, Gopal Godse, Savarkar, Parchure and Kistayya–all pleaded not guilty. On November 15, Godse and Apte both walked to the single gallows shouting 'akhand Bharat amar rahe'. Thus ended a chapter in India's history.

THE AFTERMATH

THE NEWS of Gandhi's death had spread like a shock wave, almost by its own power, and even before the All India Radio had broadcast it in a special bulletin, a crowd had gathered at Birla House.

Darkness had fallen. No one noticed two men, muffled in grey shawls, slip out of the service gate. They did not have to walk far to find a tonga. It took them to Old Delhi railway station.

That night they slept on the platform among the refugees.

The next morning they saw Delhi as a city that was being emptied of its citizens. Out of its population of two million, at least a million had gone to line the route of Gandhi funeral procession, 'a crowd far too great for either the police or the military to check', as Allan Campbell-Johnson describes it. Apte and Karkare, whether they wanted to or not, became a part of that tide of humanity and witnessed Gandhi's body being taken past.

Actually, they had hoped to call on one or two influential political leaders in Delhi whom they believed to subscribe to their thinking. Before them they would claim responsibility for Gandhi's assassination and demand money and assistance to go and live in some foreign country. But, even if there were any such people in Delhi, that day, they were not approachable. All doors were closed. Even if, as they resolutely insisted for the rest of their days, Apte and Karkare never felt the slightest regret at what they had done, it is impossible that on that day they could not have been overwhelmed by the sheer enormity of their deed, and made conscious of how great Gandhi was, how puny they themselves were.

It was long past noon when they slunk back to the railway station, and even the vast station building wore a hushed and empty look. Knowing that the Bombay trains would be watched, they bought tickets for Allahabad by the express which was due to leave at 3.30. It is a comment on the lifelong habits of the two men who, even now, could have derived some small measure of comfort from being together, that Apte travelled second class and Karkare third.

Even before they pulled out, the secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha had received a telegram from Bombay which said: 'ARRIVING DELHI ARRANGE FOR DEFENCE. N.D. APTE'.

Manorama had dutifully sent off the agreed telegram as soon as she had heard that something 'had happened to Nathuram', But it seems that Apte had already realized that it was not going to be of much use as an alibi.

They reached Bombay on 2 February and went to the Sea Green (North) Hotel. All the rooms were full, and the best that the Manager, Mr Satyavan Rele, could do for them was to give them a bed each in two separate rooms which they would have to share with other occupants and for which they would have to pay in advance. They accepted the beds, and the next morning moved to the Elphinstone Annexe Hotel where they managed to get a room to themselves. That same day they went and saw Karkare's friend G.M. Joshi in Thana. Joshi later told the police that, when he asked his visitors where they had been since he last saw them, Apte told him: 'It won't do us any good to tell you, and it would be too dangerous for you to know.'

Joshi seems to have been satisfied with the answer, and had no more questions to ask. At least that is the impression he gave the police.

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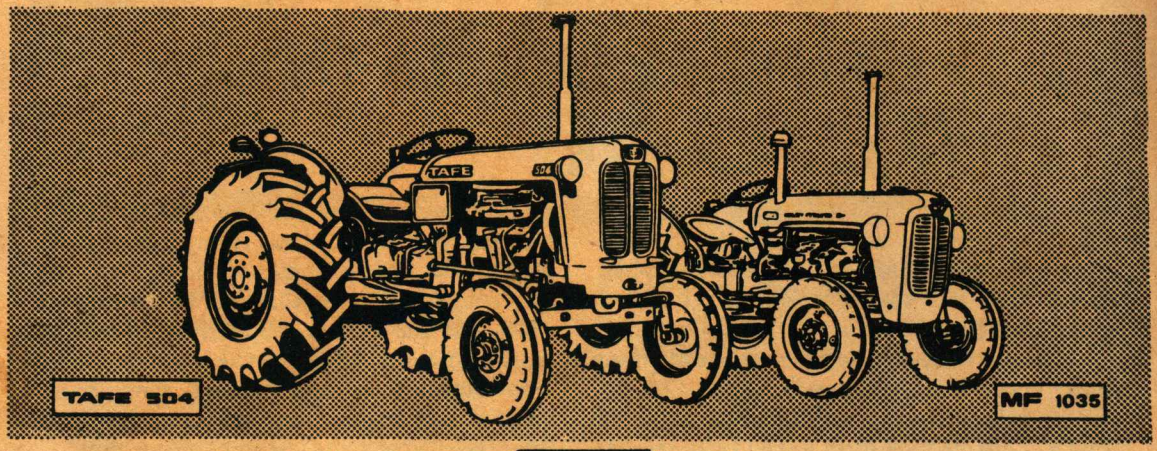

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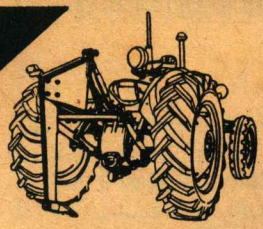
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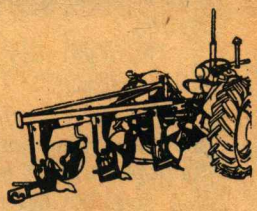
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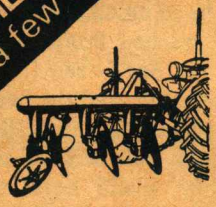
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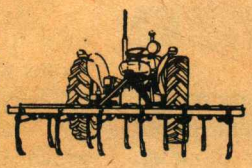
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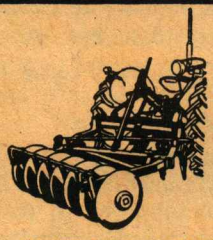
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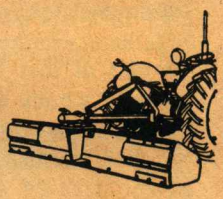
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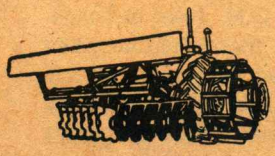
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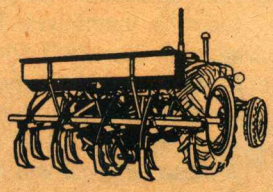
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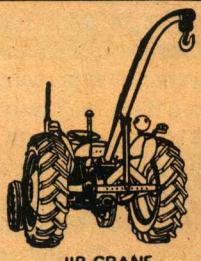
JIB CRANE

TRAILER

'Such things happen'

WHEN they had bolted from the Elphinstone Annexe, Apte and Karkare had jumped into a taxi and driven to the Arya Pathikashram at Sandhurst Bridge where, Apte confidently told Karkare, he could easily get a room because he knew the Manager, G.P. Dube. He left Karkare in the taxi with the luggage and went in to see Dube. But this time Dube had no room for Apte and, if anything, he went out of his way to be rude. Noticing that Apte was wearing a dhoti, Dube sneeringly asked him 'why he had changed his dress from English style to Indian'. Apte had meekly answered, 'Such things happen'. Later Dube revealed that he could easily have given Apte a room but was put off by his 'dirty clothes and dishevelled appearance as if he had had no change and wash for three days'.

When Apte returned to the taxi, looking crestfallen, Karkare for the first time felt that they were like hunted animals whom nothing could save.

They had themselves dropped at the Victoria Terminus, took a train to Thana and again turned up at Mr G.M. Joshi's house in Navpada, this time with their luggage.

No one can believe that even now Joshi was unaware that his two visitors were deeply involved in Gandhi's murder and were hiding from the police. Nonetheless, he stuck by them. They were desperately in need of a base while they decided on their next course of action, and Joshi's relationship with Karkare and Apte was such that he could never have turned them out of his house. Indeed, it is possible that it was he who now went to see a few friends on their behalf and brought a man called M.G. Ghaisas to see them.

Ghaisas came on the morning of the seventh, had a long talk with Apte and Karkare and went to Poona to see what the situation was like there and to bring them news of their families. He returned on the morning of the ninth, and what he had to say must have persuaded Apte and Karkare that they could visit Poona without much risk. That same afternoon they caught a train to Poona.

Now they were on home ground—a great bustling city which had always been regarded as the headquarters of the Hindu Sanghatan movement, and where they had dozens of close friends. It was the ideal place to get lost in. Their friends hid them in their houses. commiserated with them, gave them food, and even brought some of Apte's clothes from his house.

If Karkare is to be believed, it was only after they were back in their own environment that they were both gnawed by a problem of conscience. Nathuram, Madanlal, Gopal, Badge, and even the solitary camp-follower Shankar had been arrested; so had Savarkar and dozens of others who had no direct connection with the crime. It somehow did not seem right that they themselves should still be free and go on incriminating more and more of their friends who were helping them. And still less did it seem right that they should try to escape.

Karkare told the author that he believed they could quite easily have crossed into the Hyderabad state which was barely a hundred miles away and which, in those days, was as good as 'foreign' territory. What was more, in Hyderabad he had dozens of friends who subscribed to their thinking on the Hindu revival movement and whom he had helped with money as well as weapons in their struggle to hold out the marauding gangs of Kassim Rizvi.

'Then, again, we might have been able to flee to Goa,' Karkare added. 'But, even though we talked about all this often enough, we knew we were not going to do it.'

In this book *Gandhihatya ani Mee* (The Gandhi Assassination and I) Gopal Godse, too, speaks of the same sort of reluctance to escape. A day or two after Gandhi's murder, while Gopal was burning some letters, he heard a knock on the door. A Punjabi friend whom he calls Ramnath was standing outside.

'So it was your brother,' Ramnath said.

'Yes.'

'Listen, I think that you should vanish. I'll

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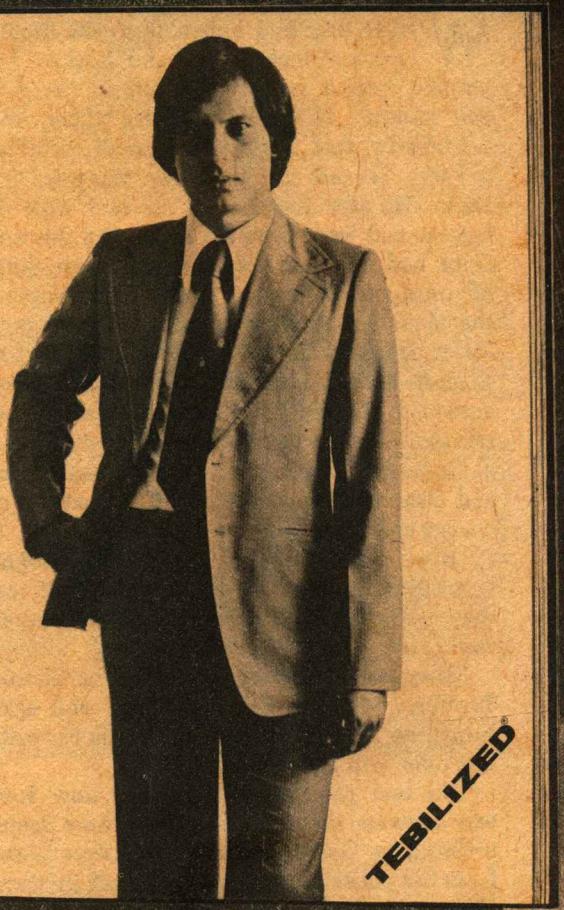

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give you a letter to a friend in Delhi. He'll look after you and then you go and live among the refugees. You speak Punjabi well in any case. No one'll find you out if you're careful.'

And then Ramnath had offered him Rs.150 in case Gopal didn't have the money to go to Delhi.

But Gopal turned down the offer—not, he says, because he thought it was impractical, but because he just did not want to run away.

Fit of bravado

APTE and Karkare now found themselves in a similar situation. It is possible that they were incapable of rational thinking anyway, or were afflicted by a fit of bravado. They decided to return to Bombay instead.

On the morning of 11 February, they were back in Joshi's house, and acutely aware that the game of hide and seek was up.

Any hour, any minute, they expected to hear the sirens in the street or see a group of casual passers-by suddenly coming to a halt and deploying themselves all round the house. The suspense had the effect of making them desperate. They endured it for two days and then, as if drawn by a spell to meet trouble halfway, they decided to go and live in a hotel in Bombay. The date was 13 February, the day a Friday.

Apte boldly walked into the foyer of Pyrke's Apollo Hotel behind the Regal Cinema and demanded a room. The Apollo was one of several hotels in Bombay at which he and Manorama Salvi had stayed earlier as 'Mr and Mrs N.D. Apte'. The reception clerk, Candido Pinto, offered him room No. 29 on the second floor. Apte agreed to take it, went out and returned with Karkare and their luggage. He signed the register as 'N. Kashinath' and put Karkare's name down as 'R. Bishnu'. This was their act of surrender. Throughout that day and during much of the night, they waited for the sound of stealthy footsteps, a loud banging on their door.

No one came for them and towards the morning, they got a little sleep.

At Pyrke's Apollo to use the telephone guests have to go down to reception desk. Soon after ten o'clock on the morning of the fourteenth, Apte and Karkare came down the steps and Apte made a telephone call. After that both went out.

At eleven a police party under Inspector B.A. Haldipur came looking for the occupants of room No. 29. Pinto told Haldipur that both 'Mr Kashinath' and 'Mr Bishnu' had gone out.

The Inspector sat down to wait. He had to wait a long time. Apte had asked Manorama to meet him at the hotel at six in the evening, and it was not till 5.30 that he returned. Haldipur saw the taxi stop at the door and glanced inquiringly at Pinto. Pinto gave him a nod.

Haldipur arrested Apte and sent him off under escort to the CID headquarters, and himself decided to wait in the hope that Karkare would show up. Karkare, who had again gone to Thana and seen Joshi, came in at 8.25.

The register of retiring rooms at Old Delhi railway station showed that Nathuram had held two tickets from Gwalior to Delhi, and with this information in hand the police, even with their 'soft' interrogation, seem to have made him admit that the pistol had been given by Dr Parchure of Gwalior. Armed with this information, Deputy Superintendent N.Y. Deulkar of the Bombay CID arrived in Gwalior on 14 February to secure Parchure's arrest.

He discovered that Parchure was already under arrest, and that he was being held as a maximum-security prisoner in a dark cell in the ancient fort of Gwalior in which the Mogul emperors used to incarcerate their maximum-security prisoners.

The substance of the accusation against Parchure seems to have been that, when he heard that Gandhi had been assassinated, he had 'distributed sweets'. The distribution of sweets, in India, has the same sort of significance as standing a round of drinks would have in Europe, a gesture of celebration. If Parchure was indeed so stupid as to 'celebrate' Gandhi's death, he was by no means alone in doing so. There are crackpots everywhere, and even men like Gandhi have their detractors.

The fact remains that in several towns, and particularly in some of the refugee camps, Gandhi's murder had been similarly celebrated. Parchure later denied that he had distributed sweets when Gandhi died, but admitted that he had said plenty of things that were sure to raise the ire of the newly formed local Congress ministry.

Quirks of fortune

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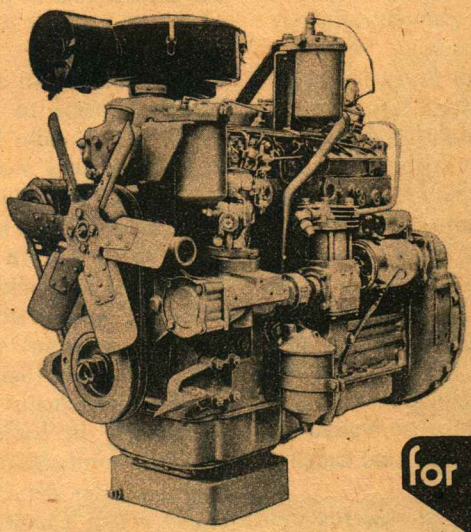

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strength, and Parchure for one firmly believed that it was the Government at Delhi that had dragooned the Maharaja of Gwalior into handing over power to the Congress instead of to his party. For their part, Congressmen in Gwalior hated Parchure with the true vehemence of suburban politicians. So when, following Gandhi's murder, there were communal disturbances in Gwalior, they seized the chance of locking up Parchure and his lieutenants under the Maintenance of Public Order ordinance.

It was a reversal of fortune reminiscent of Mogul days. Parchure had been riding on the crest of a wave and gambling for the highest stakes. Only a couple of weeks earlier, he had confidently expected to be called in to head Gwalior's first-ever democratic government. Now he was in prison.

Gwalior at this time was neither a princely state nor a part of India but something-in-between. The Maharaja's powers had passed to a Congress ministry, but the legislative formalities to merge Gwalior into the Indian Union had still not been completed. This meant that the police in India were still required by law to seek the extradition of criminals who might have escaped into Gwalior territory.

But neither the Bombay Police nor the Gwalior Police seem to have bothered unduly about this fine point in the procedure. Deulkar came and interrogated Parchure who, within two days, seems to have been persuaded to make a full confession. By this time Deulkar's superior, Deputy Inspector-General U.G. Rana, had also arrived in Gwalior. They both demanded that Parchure, who was to be charged as a member of the conspiracy to murder Gandhi, should be transferred to the 'Dominion Police'. This was done on 17 February, 'without completing the extradition proceedings'.

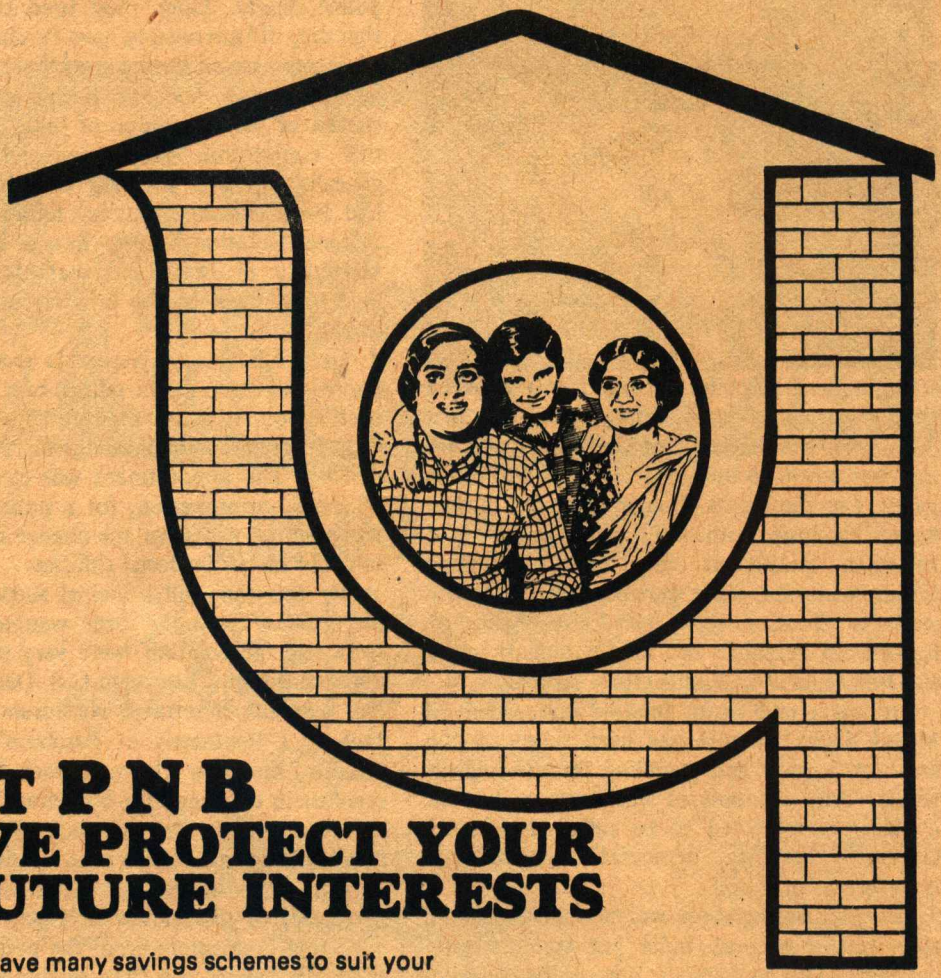
This unseemly hurry might have cost the police dearly. Later they tried to make out that they did not need to have Parchure extradited in any case on the grounds that, even though he was born in Gwalior, he happened to be a citizen of 'the dominion of India'. To support this contention, they produced Parchure's genealogical tree showing that his ancestors had lived in India, that his father had passed the matriculation examination of the Bombay University in 1879, and that his family had paid local taxes in the Bombay province back as 1855.

On 17 February, Nagarvala received a telephone call from Delhi telling him that he had been appointed as the superintendent on special duty to conduct the investigation into Gandhi's murder. The appointment was clearly a mark of special approbation; for a police officer, it was nothing less than the chance of a lifetime to prove his professional abilities.

By this time, all principal suspects were in his hands. The only three wanted men who were still 'absconding' were very much on the edge of things. They were G.S. Dandvate, who had sold the Beretta to Nathuram; Gangadhar Jadhav, a lieutenant of Parchure's; and S.D. Sharma, the man who had given Badge a .32 revolver in exchange for Nathuram's .22 pistol.

To judge by the evidence of four of the men who figured in this case—Madanlal, Gopal, Karkare and Badge—the process of building up a case of this nature is largely a matter of extorting confessions from the persons already in police hands, and then setting about trying to unearth evidence to sustain these confessions. For instance, if a suspect revealed that he had taken a meal in a certain restaurant, the police then went to that restaurant and as often as not managed to disocver some waiter, or at least another customer, who could swear to having seen the man in the restaurant. If there are flashes of inspiration, or feats of intellectual deduction, at best they only supplement this process of investigation through third-degree.

Of course, the evidence of convicted men must not be relied upon too heavily in passing judgement upon the methods employed by the keepers of the law, even if the keepers of the law themselves sought to make out that one out of the same set of criminals, Badge, was incapable of falsehoods and made him their star witness. But the fact remains that whatever methods



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they used, the police had obtained the full confessions or, as they are officially termed, 'statements' of all the accused persons in their custody except Savarkar.

Shankar Kistayya, ostensibly of his own volition, guided them to the spot in the grounds of the Mahasabha Bhavan in Delhi where he, at Badge's bidding, had buried the unused grenades and explosives after their first attempt to kill Gandhi had failed; and Apte, equally willingly, showed them the tree which Nathuram had used for target practice in Delhi and even led his captors to Gwalior and the enclosure at the side of Parchure's house to show the door against which they had tried out the Beretta before buying it.

Both the tree trunk and the door panel were made exhibits in the case.

Thus, bit by bit, what revealed in the statements was painstakingly rebuilt by prodigious effort into cases that the most adroit of defence lawyers could not dent.

The exception was Savarkar.

The mass of papers seized from his house had revealed nothing that could remotely be connected with Gandhi's murder and, of course, even under arrest Savarkar was too big a personality to be subjected to the standard methods of 'dragging out' information.

However, Nagarvala had convinced himself that Savarkar was the organizer of the plot to kill Gandhi and was desperate to be proved right. It is also possible that the entire police organization believed, rightly or wrongly, that 'someone up there' would be highly gratified if Savarkar could be roped in.

No credibility

IN HIS book on the assassination, Gopal Godse writes of the difficulty he experienced in trying to convince his interrogators that he had not visited Savarkar on his way to Delhi. By the time he was able to do so 'no part of my body was free from bruises'.

His problem was that he really had no idea where Savarkar's house was and thus could not, even through terror of pain, evade the beatings by admitting whatever they wanted him to because, 'even a false admission would have instantly been followed by other questions. How had I gone to the house, who else was there, what did we talk about, at what time? It was just not possible for me to weave a credible story'.

The one man among the captives who looked likely to co-operate with the police in helping them to establish Savarkar's involvement was Digambar Badge, and he actually was as good as two separate witnesses because, even in police custody, Shankar still remained wholly dependent upon Badge and could be relied upon to say whatever Badge told him to.

But in this the police were wrong and Badge was far from co-operative. In his testimony at the trial, he asserted that he 'regarded Savarkar as a Devta' (incarnation of God), and twenty-seven years later he still professes to hold Savarkar in the same veneration.

It is difficult to see Badge as a man who sets much store by conventional norms of veracity, and still less as the sort of person who would remain blindly loyal to a cause or person, but perhaps he did venerate Savarkar with the sort of unquestioning devotion that only the most uncultivated of people are capable of developing towards their heroes.

Indeed, the bulk of Gandhi's own following was made up of such people. Whatever it was, Badge insisted to the author that even though he had blurted out the full story of the plot as far as he knew it, without much persuasion he had put up a valiant struggle against being made to testify against Savarkar. And even Gopal Godse, who had no reason to regard Badge with friendliness, mentions how the police found him 'extremely difficult' over this issue. 'But then', Gopal concludes, 'the interrogators possessed the ability to make even a dumb man articulate.'

In the end Badge gave in. He agreed to say on oath that he saw Nathuram and Apte with Savarkar and that Savarkar, within Badge's hearing had blessed their venture with the words 'Yeshasvi houn ya.'

After that Badge's troubles ceased. Even while in custody, he lived as a sort of favoured guest of the Police Department. He was plied with meat, eggs, sweets, cigarettes and liquor, and put on a stipend. Shankar also came in for preferential treatment.

Poor Shankar must have been more bewildered than ever. Almost without knowing what was happening, he had found himself facing a life sentence. He was incapable of taking in the situation. The things he came out with in the sworn statement that he made in the court make one wonder whether they were hallucinations or sobering glimpses of the inner workings

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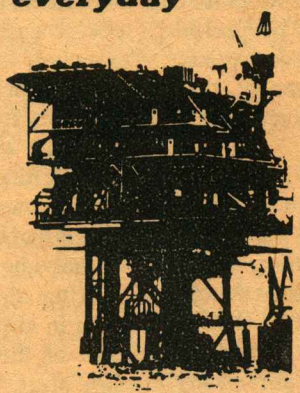

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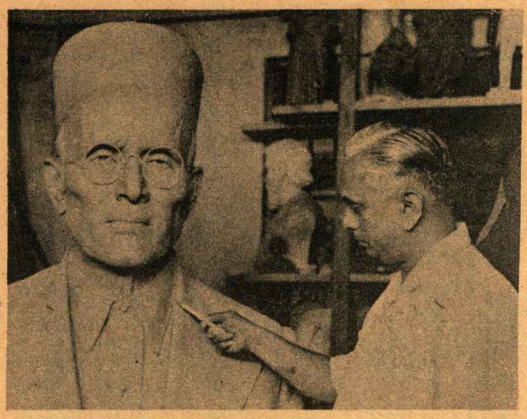

of police methods. He says:

> 'Nagarvala used to meet Badge and ask: 'Have you instructed Shankar?' and to the Jailor he said, 'If he instructs Shankar give Badge liquor.' Badge was instructing me as to what to say. I had told Badge, 'When I do not know anything why should I say all this?'

Badge answered that he had to say all this because it was the only way to make sure that he would be acquitted. He used to coach Shankar assiduously and make him repeat all that he was told to say. Shankar goes on:

> One night Nagarvala came and. . .asked Badge, 'Have you given Shankar enough practice?' (and then) asked me in Hindustani what I had to say. I committed 5-6 mistakes.

Apparently, when Shankar revealed all this to the court-appointed counsel who had to defend him and the Jailor somehow came to know of it, he got angry with him and berated him and 'Badge slapped me before the jailor'.

At least that was the sort of language Shankar could understand. After that he made no difficulties and learned his role diligently. And at the end of his statement, after making a plea that he knew nothing and had no connection with the case, Shankar, as though seeking proof of good behaviour, ends with the admission: 'whatever Badge has instructed me to say I have said'.

THE TRIAL opened in Delhi in the searing heat of midsummer. It was held not in a common courtroom but in a spacious hall in Delhi's Mogul stronghold, the Red Fort.

And, if the courtroom was something out of the ordinary, so was the court itself; it was specially constituted by an order of the government and empowered, by another order, to exercise a special power that Delhi courts had not hitherto possessed—that of tendering a full pardon to an accused in a murder case.

The purpose of this cumbersome legislative provision was to make it possible for the trial judge to pardon Badge in advance, and this he promptly did. From then on Badge, from being an accused, became 'the approver'.

And, almost in line with the 'special' nature of everything else, even the accused persons were housed in a barracks within the Red Fort which, by another government notification, was declared to be a 'prison'.

Eight men were charged with murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and other charges connected with violations of the Explosive Substances Act. They were Nathuram Godse, Narayan Apte, Vishnu Karkare, Madanlal Pahva, Gopal Godse, Vinayak Savarkar, Dattatray Parchure and Shankar Kistayya.

Nathuram admitted that he had killed Gandhi, but the others pleaded 'not guilty' to all the charges. The trial went on for nearly eight months while the summer turned to winter. On 10 February the judge, Atma Charan, delivered his judgement. Only Savarkar was acquitted. Of the remaining seven, Nathuram and Apte were sentenced to death, and the others given sentences of imprisonment for life.

Shankar, Gopal Godse says, looked dazed. He found it altogether impossible to comprehend how the man for whom he had done whatever he was accused of doing—Badge—had got off, while he himself was to spend his life in jail. Gopal Godse also mentions that, much to everyone's surprise, the only man who burst into violent sobs when he heard the judgement was Badge.

The convicted men were sent to the Central Jail in Ambala to serve their sentences. From there all, including Nathuram, filed appeals in the Punjab High Court against this judgement. Nathuram's appeal was not against his own sentence, but against the charge of conspiracy for which the others had been convicted. Four months later, the High Court pronounced its judgement. Parchure and Shankar were both 'given the benefit of doubt' and acquitted, but the sentences of the others were confirmed.

November 15 was fixed as the day for the hanging. On the day before, Nathuram and Apte were allowed to be visited by relatives and friends. Apte, who was allowed only half an hour to see his wife, found that she was weeping bitterly; he had to admonish her: 'You have the rest of your life to weep; but we have only half

an hour to talk about practical things.'

She stopped weeping and listened.

The relatives had brought them things to eat, with which they supplemented their last meals. After dinner, the other three prisoners, Gopal, Madanlal and Karkare, were allowed to go and sit in the condemned cell and keep them company. Together they recited the second, the eleventh and the eighteenth cantos of the Gita.

By that time it was ten o'clock; time for the others to go back to their cells.

But at dawn the next morning they again went to the condemned cells and read more verses from the Gita. After that, Nathuram and Apte had their baths. Gopal asked his brother; "Anna (elder brother), are you going to shave?"

Nathuram rubbed his hand over his chin. 'I shaved last night. It's not as though I'm going to a party.'

As a last courtesy, the prison warders brought in coffee for Nathuram and tea for the others, and they all drank together. But now the others had to leave. The condemned men had to be 'prepared' for the hanging. The black robes in which they were to be dressed were brought in by the guards.

Nathuram and Apte came out of their cells, wearing black and each carrying in his hands a map of undivided India, the saffron flag of the Hindu movement, and a copy of the Gita. This was the first time they had been allowed out of their maximum-security cells so early in the morning, and Apte drew Nathuram's attention to the clear cold morning sunlight of the Punjab winter.

'Yes, like the sun in Simla,' Nathuram commented.

As they walked towards the hanging shed, they both shouted:

'Akhand Bharat Amar Rahe!' ('Long live undivided India!')

They were guided towards the single gallows that had been erected for them, with two loops neatly arranged to slip over their heads, suspended from the same beam. They went towards it, singing a Sanskrit verse in unison which had the refrain: 'Even as we die, we salute you, our land of birth.'

They were cremated with Hindu rites in the open ground outside the prison wall. And in order that no sort of monument may ever come on the place of cremation, in time-honoured Mogul style, the entire field was ploughed and planted with grass. Also, even though, according to ritual, their ashes were immersed in a nearby river, the Ghaggar, it was all done under a strict cloak of secrecy so that no one should ever discover the actual spot where the ashes were thrown.

THE END

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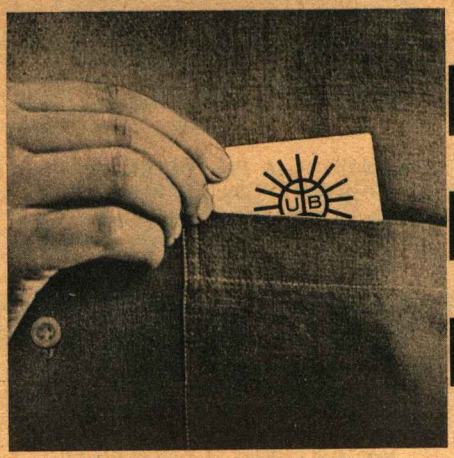

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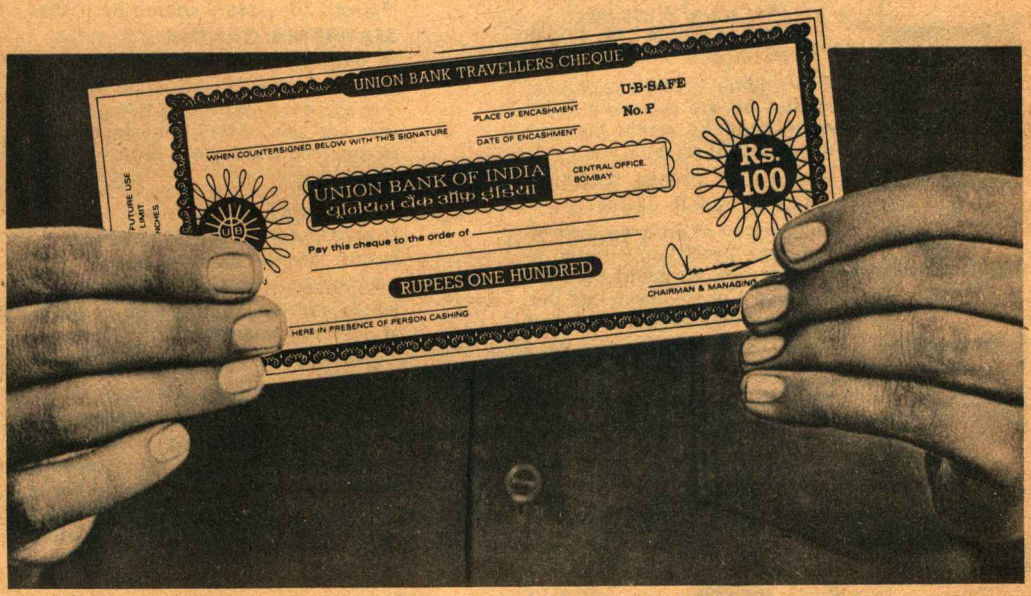

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